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Kent on Sunday

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Mid edition No 750



INVESTMENT

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HISTORY

When JFK came on castle visit

And its influence on the White House

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Is Brexit blinding us to a crisis of our own making?

DOES anyone remember a life before Brexit? When news headlines were not dominated by either the debate leading up to the referendum or the endless discussion about just what form it will take now we've voted to leave?

It has become now, for so many, both in Westminster and on the street, the answer to solve all our woes.

Yet those woes are continuing on a day-to-day basis in this country and Brexit may just be casting such a dark shadow, we are losing sight of them.

Pause for a moment and consider what is going on around you, right here, right now, and how, actually, none of them are likely to improve in a world where we don't belong to the European Union.

Our local councils have been subject to such a powerful blend of ideology and austerity, services we once took for granted are being extinguished or downgraded at an alarming rate; our hospitals and health professionals face such tough budgets they're even having to ban non-emergency operations for months on end (see page 8); our police force is being cut to the bone at a time of increasing security fears; our schools are so skint some are considering charging parents or even closing for a day.

These are big major issues which are now so dire it is hard to see how any future government can reverse them in time to save a level of provision we have all come to expect, given the level of financial commitment which would be required.

Regardless of the way you voted in the EU referendum - and let us be clear, whatever way you did now we need to stand united to make it work for the sake of our children and future generations - do not allow Brexit to blind us to potentially more serious and pressing issues. Or we'll find ourselves really in trouble.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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Could Manston be used to launch spaceships?

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk



LAUNCH: Campaigners have secured a meeting with the UK Space Agency

THE former Manston airport site will be pitched to the UK Space Agency later this month as a potential launchpad, it has emerged.

Campaigners working to get planes flying again in Thanet have secured the meeting with space chiefs at the Royal Aeronautical Society in London on February 21.

Bosses will hear a ten-minute presentation from the campaigners, who will champion the benefits of using Manston for launching spacecraft.

Driving the movement is Russ Timpson, who stood for the Liberal Democrats in South Thanet in 2015.

He explained how there are two main methods of accessing orbital flight - rockets punching through the atmosphere vertically, and vehicles launched by aircraft taking off in the more conventional manner from airport runways.

"We are trying to say that Manston has a viable future as an airport hub - not necessarily as a passenger airport - we are looking at all other possible revenue streams," he told KoS.

"If they'll listen, we intend to report the results of the discussion to Thanet District Council."

Ukip leader Chris Wells said: "As ever, I am always interested in potential opportunities for the Manston airport site.

"The opportunities must be credible, realistic, with feet-on-the-ground political business plans, even for a spaceport."

The idea has also been backed by Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale, who told KoS: "The two [aircraft and spacecraft] are not mutually incompatible, and there is no reason why Manston shouldn't be used for all sorts of purposes as space travel develops.

"But that is a long way ahead, we need Manston to serve the UK immediately for freight and passenger services to the far east."

The council is currently inviting feedback on plans to turn the site over from aviation-only use to mixed-use in its local plan - a document outlining how development will be shaped in the district up to 2031.

The land is currently owned by businessmen behind the Stone Hill Park project, who have submitted a planning application to develop 2,500 homes and leisure facilities, and claimed this week building could begin as early as this year.

Professor appointed to key role in inquiry into child sexual abuse

A LEADING professor from the University of Kent was this week confirmed as an expert witness for the independent inquiry into child sex abuse.

The inquiry will "investigate whether public bodies and other non-state institutions in England and Wales have taken seriously their responsibility to protect children from sexual abuse, and "make meaningful recommendations for change in the future".

It has so far been dogged by resignations of key figues appointed to the panel.

Professor Gordon Lynch, the Michael Ramsey professor of modern theology at the University of Kent's school of European culture and languages, together with professor Stephen Constantine from the University of Lancaster, has been appointed to advise the investigation into child sexual abuse in child migration schemes.

These schemes were operated by a number of charities and religious organisations and sent several thousand British children to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the former Southern Rhodesia.

Professor Lynch has already co-authored a substantial initial report, with Professor Constantine, for the inquiry on these child migration schemes and will continue to provide other evidence and reports for the inquiry as it undertakes public hearings as part of this investigation in March and July 2017.

The inquiry will consider former child migrants' experiences of sexual abuse, whether organisations involved failed in their duty of care at the time, and whether subsequent organisational responses have been adequate. With a substantial body of archival material to be reviewed from 20 organisations, this investigation will be the most substantial inquiry into these child migration schemes to have been undertaken in the UK.

£2.4m cocaine smuggler is handed lengthy jail term

A DUTCHMAN caught smuggling cocaine worth more than £2.4 million into Kent has been jailed for 23 years.

John Buwalda hid behind a respectable business front to bring bags containing 48lb (22kg) of high purity cocaine in a light aircraft from the Netherlands to Rochester Airport on June 30 last year.

Former business consultant Buwalda, 53, and "professional courier" Jan Polak, 61, were found guilty of plotting to smuggle the class A drugs following a trial at the Old Bailey in December.

Polak made no reaction as he was jailed for 17 years for his role as a "trusted member" of gang.

Buwalda let out a heavy sigh before being led from the dock and into the cells.

Police and crime panel nods through £5 council tax hike

PLANS to raise council tax by an extra £5 on average to keep more officers on the county's streets have been unanimously approved by the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

The hike was proposed by Kent's Conservative police and crime commissioner Matthew Scott at the start of the year to enable the force to recruit more police officers and PCSOs.

One of Mr Scott's main duties in his £85,000-a-year role is to set the amount that Kent Police receives from council tax, known as the policing precept.

Following a meeting in Maidstone on Thursday, an average household bill for 2017/18 has been set at £157.15, representing an increase of £5 or 3.3 per cent.

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines **@kentnews.co.uk** during the past week

Grammar school won't ask parents for cash

A GRAMMAR school headteacher has dismissed the possibility of asking parents for money after Cranbrook School last week admitted it was consulting with parents over the idea.

The Grammar School Heads' Association claims more than half of the country's grammars could be worse off if a new 'fair funding' plan comes into place, even though the government says funding would be spread more evenly across the country.

Geoff Wybar, executive head of Gravesend Grammar School, said plans ''on the surface were a good idea'' but added ''since this is being done in the context of zero increase in overall funding, it does seem to be rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic''.



PLEDGE: Chris Grayling

Night flight disturbance to be managed

NIGHT flights currently disturbing communities in west Kent will be managed to minimise their impact, as plans for airport expansion are set to take off, the transport secretary has confirmed.

Chris Grayling addressed MPs in the House of Commons where he launched a consultation into plans for a new runway at Heathrow, issuing a signal to the world that Britain will be open for business after Brexit.

Tonbridge and Malling MP Tom Tugendhat told the Commons he had written to the transport secretary on numerous occasions, outlining his fears that airspace management over parts of west Kent is becoming a very serious problem for constituents, particularly in reference to night flights.

In response, Mr Grayling said: "This is a very important point and it's an issue I have been looking at – there's some very innovative ways around the country of dealing with this.

"One of the things we will be able to glean from this consultation is the views of the public of how we best should manage night flights in order to minimise the impact on communities.

"Being able to follow more exact flight paths will make a significant difference."

Family's agony as they await formal ID on body found floating in river

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

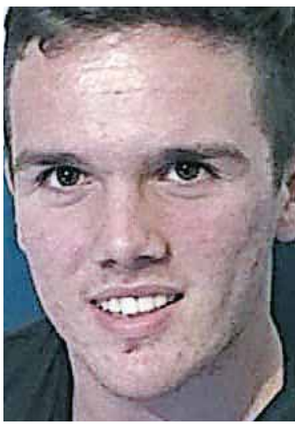
POLICE carrying out tests to identify a body found in the River Medway - feared to be that of missing teenager Ben Savage - will not be finished for another "couple of weeks" it was confirmed on Friday.

The family of the missing 18-year-old were informed of the discovery of the body which was recovered on Wednesday afternoon after being spotted by a passer-by near Rochester Bridge.

Officers from the police search and marine unit attended the scene along with the coastguard, however the death is not being treated as suspicious.

It is feared it is the body of the teenager who was reported missing on the morning of Tuesday, December 6. CCTV footage saw him walking onto Sun Pier in Chatham at around 3.15am after a night out at the Tap'n'Tin venue in the town.

His disappearance sparked a huge police search of the river and surrounding area, but he was never traced.



MISSING: Ben Savage

Shortly after he went missing, his mother, Tara, issued a statement on behalf of his family acknowledging the family were bracing themselves for the worst.

She said: "After an extensive review of CCTV footage, we are coming to terms with the likelihood that Ben fell in the River Medway during the early hours of Tuesday morning.

"Based on the temperature of the water, the river currents and Ben's level of consciousness when entering the river, we have to assume that he would have been unable to swim to safety. We would again like to thank the public for their overwhelming efforts searching for Ben."

Detective inspector Chris Greenstreet said at that time: "Tragically, the most likely explanation for Mr Savage's disappearance is that he entered the river. The evidence is compelling when you also consider that it would be very out of character for him to go missing and to not contact his family or friends.

"We have kept his immediate family informed throughout the investigation and I would like to pay tribute to them for how dignified and supportive they have been."

A&E winter warning as pressure grows

BOSSES at a hospital trust in east Kent are urging patients to avoid A&E if possible as winter pressures continue to mount on the NHS.

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, which runs major hospitals in Ashford, Canterbury and Margate, says it has assessed the way staff have been deployed, in order to ensure more can look after patients that do arrive for emergency treatment.

It is thought that half of patients who attend A&E with minor conditions could be speedily treated elsewhere.

East Kent Hospitals' chief operating officer, Jane Ely, said: "The winter pressures facing the NHS have been well-publicised, and hospital trusts in England are experiencing enormous challenges, particularly in emergency care. This can mean that patients wait longer than we want them to.

"Patients can help us to ease the pressure by remembering that our emergency departments are for emergencies and life-threatening situations only."

Farage: We should follow Trump's lead

NIGEL Farage has suggested Britain should follow the lead of Donald Trump and introduce ''extreme vetting'' to our borders.

The former Ukip leader defended Mr Trump's controversial travel ban which has caused uproar around the world, saying the US president is entitled to introduce the measures in a bid to crack down on any would-be jihadis entering the country.

And he blamed the ban - which has sparked protests in the US and elsewhere - on Germany's open-door policy towards those fleeing conflict in the Middle East.

The Westerham-based politican and friend of Mr Trump, said: ''He was elected to get tough, he was elected to say he will do everything within his power to protect America from infiltration by Isis terrorists. Now there are seven countries on that list, he is entitled to do this, he was voted in on this.''

''He is fully entitled to do this, and as far as we are concerned in this country, yes I would like to see extreme vetting.''

Cathedral's Dallas destined 19ft window

A 19ft-high stained glass window built by experts at Canterbury Cathedral will be on display this weekend - prior to it being flown out to its new home in Dallas, Texas.

The window, which replicates an original stained glass work in the cathedral, has been a work in the making by its Stained Glass Studio for the past two years. It will then be shipped to the US where it will be used by clergy to illustrate Bible stories for young members in the Dallas congregation.

Director of the project, Leonie Seliger, explained: ''This was a massive undertaking because the windows here were produced by the greatest stained glass artists of the time so to replicate their work would require an incredible amount of talent and skill.''

Panels from the window will be on public display in the Canterbury Cathedral Crypt from February 4 until February 22.

The Crypt is generally open between 10am and 5.30pm Monday to Saturday and 12.30pm to 2.30 on Sunday.

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Value of Hatton Garden raid rockets to £25m, court hears

By Nina Massey
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



ACCESS: Crooks drilled a hole to access the safety deposit boxes

THE estimated value of goods stolen in the daring Hatton Garden raid has risen to around £25 million, a court heard this week.

It is thought the prosecution is seeking up to £25m from five of the men at the heart of the conspiracy.

The group's oldest member, 78-year-old Brian Reader from Dartford, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit burglary along with three other men in September 2015.

He was jailed for six years, and has since had applications for his sentence to be cut due to health concerns refused.

Woolwich Crown Court heard that a full confiscation hearing is expected to last around six weeks, and a date was set for January 15 2018, with a deadline of April 30 that year.

Philip Evans QC, prosecuting, said: "This is an exceptional case which warrants an extension."

It had originally been thought that some £14m worth of goods had been snatched during the raid at Hatton Garden Safe Deposit Ltd.

If members of the gang do not pay back what the judge rules they gained from the crime, they could face up to a maximum of 14 years of jail time being added to their sentences, without parole.

Tom Wainwright, for Reader, asked for a QC to be appointed to his client's case, stating they would have the required skill to deal with proceedings of this length and Reader's health. He said: "The case is made more complex because Mr Reader is not in good health. He is likely to be in worse health come December or January."

The gang ransacked 73 boxes in London's jewellery quarter after using a drill to bore a hole into the vault wall.

At the end of the trial, two-thirds of the proceeds of the burglary remained unaccounted for. Although some of the goods - around £4m worth - were recovered, detectives were left with "thousands of items of jewellery", including hundreds of gold chains and rings.

The confiscation hearing, under the Proceeds of Crime Act, will determine how each of the defendants benefited from the raid.

Southern and Aslef finally strike a deal

A DEAL to end a bitter dispute between Southern Railway and drivers' union Aslef over driver-only trains has been agreed.

The two sides have been holding lengthy talks in a bid to resolve a long-running row.

Around 1,000 drivers will now vote on the deal, bringing some relief to passengers who have suffered months of disruption because of industrial action and staff shortages.

Stars pull pints for charity fundraiser

COMIC Bobby Davro and snooker stars Ken Doherty and Stuart Bingham wer the star turns at a charity snooker night at the Faversham Creek Hotel last weekend.

The event, which saw stars pull pints for the locals, raised more than £2,500 for the Little Haven Children's Hospice in Essex.

Lorry reverses on M20

A LORRY driver who reversed up the M20 after missing his exit has been given a hefty fine.

The driver was caught by police after he reversed up the hard shoulder and across the slip road for the Channel Tunnel at junction 11a on Monday. Police said: ''The driver received two graduated fixed penalty notices, totalling £1,000, which he paid before continuing on his journey.''



Anger as CCG bans all non-emergency surgery 'til April

THE Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) has hit out at a cost-cutting move to suspend non-urgent surgery branding it "unprecedented and unfair".

Cash-strapped West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group has implemented the policy in a bid to make financial savings of £3.2 million. Some 1,700 patients will be affected.

It means until the new financial year starts in April non-urgent surgery will be delayed as the NHS body looks to stay within budget.

Clare Marx, president of the RCS, said: "It is unprecedented and unfair. Patients, some of whom may be in severe discomfort or pain, should not be made to wait longer for treatment because the CCG has run out of money and surgical patients are perceived as easily postponed.



"The CCG is trying to make short-term savings which may have major consequences for patients."

Dr Ian Ayres, West Kent CCG's accountable officer, said "Patients will continue to be referred by their GP outpatient appointment and be seen by a consultant. A judgment will then be made as to whether the required procedure is urgent, or non-urgent and could wait."

Brexit will not delay Lydd Airport's take off plans

PLANS for expansion at Lydd Airport are set to take off, a senior boss has confirmed, despite uncertainty over Brexit.

Members of the Lydd Airport Consultative Committee were this week told by executive manager Hani Mutlaq there was a long-term commitment to deliver on promises of a successful, modern regional airport supporting a substantial number of new jobs and acting as a catalyst for economic growth in the region.

Central to Lydd's ambitious development plans is the construction of a runway extension and the building of a new terminal licensed to handle up to 500,000 passengers a year. Planning consent for both has already been granted.

Mr Mutlaq reported that the airport's legal team are in the final stages of negotiations to buy an area of agricultural land to enable the existing 1,500m runway to be extended.

Once resolved, tenders for the project will then be prepared and issued and he predicted that work would start on the runway "by summer 2018 with work completed by early 2019".

Meanwhile, rising demand for more business and general aviation facilities has led to the addition of two new hangars at a cost of more than £850,000.

Mr Mutlaq told the meeting: "The airport is heading in the right direction. Our expansion plans are progressing and the support of the owner is strong.

"Indeed we are even considering bringing forward our plans - a sure sign of our confidence in Lydd Airport."

Garden city school all set

THE first primary school at Ebbsfleet Garden City is set to open in September, bosses have confirmed.

Cherry Orchard in Castle Hill will cater for 420 pupils to service the growing housing developments in the area, visited this week by MPs Gareth Johnson and Adam Holloway.

Crews rescue woman

FIREFIGHTERS led a woman to safety following a crash on the A251 Ashford Road in Sheldwich near Faversham on Thursday night.

Crews stabilised the vehicle and used a short ladder to assist with the rescue effort, before making the scene safe.

Pub garden glassing

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after a man was glassed in a pub garden in Maidstone.

It was reported that during the assault, the victim was attacked by three men in the garden of the White Rabbit Pub in Sandling Road.

Dog restriction plans

DOG walkers in Tonbridge and Malling could be fined up to £80 for a series of offences under planned new rules.

Proposed restrictions include banning dogs from council-owned and maintained children's play areas and a limit of six canines in public spaces.







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Probe into prison death

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A GOUDHURST father whose body was found hanged in a prison cell warned staff he felt his life was in danger after threats from fellow inmates, a court was told.

The body of Levi Smith, 41, of John Stacey Heights, was discovered on November 12, 2014 in a cell at HMP Elmley on the Isle of Sheppey.

Assistant coroner Allison Summers told an inquest at The Archbishop's Palace in Maidstone how Mr Smith had been in and out of jail and undertook a drug detox programme after returning to Elmley in September 2014.

Mr Smith had raised concerns to staff about his safety after he claimed threats were made to him by other prisoners.

He was moved to the segregation unit of the jail - primarily used to punish inmates who break the rules, but witnesses told the court it is also considered a place of protection.

On November 11 he complained of chest pains for a second time and was seen in the health care unit of the prison where he expressed anxiety to staff about his safety and said he would kill himself.



PRISON: Levi Smith had been ''in and out'' of HMP Elmley, a court was told

Staff raised concerns and a care planning system, known as Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT), was initiated, where Mr Smith would be subjected to hourly observations by a member of staff.

At 6.30am the following morning, he was found hanging in his cell and, despite resuscitation attempts, he was pronounced dead at the scene.

In a statement read to the court, Mr Smith's mother, Charlotte, described her son as "a popular, happy, family man who loved his children".

One of the members of staff he confided in was chaplain Ken George, who told the court he had worked at the prison for 18 years.

"Prisoners report threats regularly and we deal with them on a daily basis," he said.

"There are bound to be tensions among 1,250 prisoners."

Ms Summers told an 11-strong jury it would need to consider, among other facts, whether Mr Smith "intended to take his own life or intended to be rescued".

The inquest continues and is expected to run for at least two weeks.

Claim a share of £14.5m pot

ECONOMIC chiefs in Kent and Medway are urging the county's rural businesses to bid for a share of development funding worth some £14.5m.

Defra has announced the next round of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Growth Programme is now open for bids, in which rural and farm businesses can put their case for funding for projects. These can be schemes that help new companies get off the ground, support existing one to grow, develop new products and access new export markets.

Bake Off star visits hostel

GREAT British Bake Off star Paul Hollywood has become a patron for Canterbury-based homeless charity Porchlight.

The baker, who lives near the city, recently visited one of Porchlight's hostels where he had breakfast with the residents, swapped recipes and even tried some of their baking.

He said: "I see the difference that Porchlight makes every day and it's a cause close to my heart."

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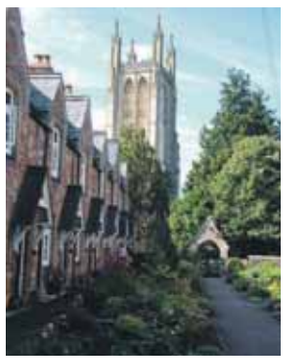


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Funding boost set to unlock more than £100m in investment

Government cash unveiled this week boosts key flood defences, town centre regeneration and road improvements

By Tom Pyman & Emily King
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

MAJOR capital projects across Kent and Medway have been boosted by a government cash injection of some £34.2 million - and that could unlock nearly three times that in additional investment.

Communities and local government minister Andrew Percy announced on Thursday a package of projects across the county will receive the funding, to help create jobs, support businesses and create new growth opportunities.

Among them will be some £4.3m used to transform Dartford town centre, £4.8m to increase rail connectivity at Ashford International, £1.53m to redevelop Fort Halstead in Sevenoaks and £1.26m has been unlocked for A2500 Lower Road improvements on Sheppey.

In Medway, Rochester Airport Technology Park, will benefit from a £3.7m injection and the Strood Civic Centre flood mitigation works project has received £3.5m.

Elsewhere, £4.6m will be used for the Leigh Flood Storage Area in Tonbridge - seen as essential to help in the fight against flooding in the town and surrounding villages - a further £4.4m for the A2 off-slip at Canterbury and £6.12m for the Kent and Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise Hub in the city.

The cash was awarded to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), which drives economic growth across the county.

This latest award is on top of £488m of Growth Deals monies already awarded to the SELEP. Growth Deals are central funds from Westminster designed to unlock potential, create jobs and benefit local communities.

It is thought this latest investment of £102m will deliver an additional 6,129 new homes, create or safeguard 30,785 jobs and secure a further £141 million of private sector investment across the region.

SELEP claims the £34.2m announced this week will leverage some £112m in further private funding almost straight away.

In total, the SELEP Growth Deal from 2014-2020 now stands at £590.8m which is set to deliver 78,000 jobs, 29,000 homes in total and attract a further £960m extra investment into the south east over the next five years.

Projects in Kent and Medway that have previously received funding have included regeneration projects in Tonbridge and Sittingbourne town centre, improvements to junction four of the M20 at Leybourne, plus the Maidstone gyratory and Rathmore Road link in Gravesend.

Geoff Miles, SELEP vice chair and chair of Kent & Medway Economic Partnership, said: "This investment enables us to drive forward our shared growth agenda delivering economic growth, new jobs, facilitating housing, improving connectivity and boosting skills.



BENEFIT: The Rochester Airport Technology Park is just one of the projects to benefit from the cash

"The additional funding that will be leveraged into the south east as a result of these investments is testament to the continued success of our area."

One of the key investments is in the Leigh Flood Storage Area - a massive overflow tank which stores rising water levels in the Medway to ease the river banks during heavy downpours.

There has long been a clamour to invest in it as a key weapon in the fight against flooding along the river between the town and surrounding villages.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council leader Nicolas Heslop said the funding would give local people more certainty on the future of flooding in the area.

He explained: "Knowing that we will be able to deliver much needed measures to increase the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and in turn reduce flood risk will see significant growth to business and property within communities along the River Medway and this will give peace of mind and a huge boost to those who have been affected by flooding in previous years."

Fort Halstead's future has been far from clear for years since the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DStL) announced it was closing in 2011 with the loss of hundreds of jobs.

Formerly a top secret base which handled research and forensive investigations into explosives, it was there the bus blown up in the 2005 London bombings was sent for analysis.

Sevenoaks District Council leader, Peter Fleming, said: "We are pleased that both SELEP and government has seen value in the Fort Halstead project.

"Since DStL announced they were leaving six years ago we have been working tirelessly with the new owners to make sure the site remains employment led.

"After a planning appeal a government inspector agreed and therefore alongside 450 homes any development will have to both resupply the lost jobs and see these delivered in advance of the housing.

"The funding will allow the council to work with the owners to help bring these jobs forward, allowing the fort to remain a major employment site in the district into the future."

The news was also welcomed by political figures in Dartford, including council leader, Jeremy Kite, and MP Gareth Johnson.

"I am thrilled to finally hear the news of our bid that we have been waiting for," said Cllr Kite. "In truth, the high ranking given to this project is extremely welcome but it is no less than our team deserve.

"Working together the council, MP and SELEP have created, supported and lobbied for a funding bid of the highest quality.

"Our strategic location and desirability for homes and business has turned Dartford into an area of high growth, but we have made the point repeatedly that the growth cannot be sustained without investment in infrastructure.

"This announcement is the first of several we need that must include a practical resolution to the nightmare caused to our town by traffic on the M25.

"This investment will help fuel the transformation of our town centre - improving public spaces, helping create a new market square and allowing us to take a fresh look at the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

"It is only one part of the jigsaw, but it is a major one nevertheless and I am both delighted and proud of our team.

"We have worked together with a single focus from civic centre to Westminster and it has paid dividends."

Mr Johnson added: "It will help the economic situation by bringing more people into the town, improve public spaces and help create a new market square.

"This money will give Dartford a significant lift and I look forward to seeing it make a real difference the lives of everyone who lives in Dartford."

The two Medway projects - Rochester Airport Technology Park and flood mitigation works at Strood Civic Centre - will create at least 2,000 jobs and up to 325 quality homes, council chiefs said.

Medway Council bid for the money with a view that both initiatives would attract inward investment, raise local aspirations and transform key sites in the area.

Funding for the technology park will go towards the installation of infrastructure on the site for future business, such as access roads and a water and electricity supply.

Business occupiers of the site will benefit from Enterprise Zone tax discounts for a five year period to a maximum value of £275,000.

The brownfield Civic Centre land has been identified as a site for regeneration and an ideal location for up to 325 waterfront homes, but at present the site is at considerable risk of flooding and requires protection works before it can be redeveloped.

Council leader Alan Jarrett said: "This funding will help us to move forward with important projects that are going to be vital for Medway's growth and economic success in years to come."



FLOOD: The Leigh Flood Storage Area is to get investment to ease fears when the river breaks its banks. Pic: ADY KERRY

Mum 'well enough' to leave hours before death

An inquest began this week into the death of young mum Sian Hollands, 25, who died while at a Kent hospital

By Tom Pyman
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DISGUSTED: Sian Hollands' mother, Nicola Smith, grandmother Christine Smith (middle) and sister Ebony (right)

THE family of a Dartford mother told by hospital staff she was well enough to leave hours before her death say they are "disgusted".

Sian Hollands, 25, was declared dead on November 15, 2015, having been admitted to A&E at Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford the day before, where staff had been "horrible" to her, a court was told.

Her mother, Nicola Smith, told an inquest at Gravesend Old Town Hall this week, which will establish the facts surrounding her death, that her daughter was a recovering drug addict recently out of prison, but vowed she had turned her life around.

The mum-of-three told Mrs Smith and Carl Alleyne, a partner with whom she had an on-off relationship, she was suffering withdrawal symptoms having not taken medication for three days as part of her recovery programme and was eventually taken to hospital by ambulance on the evening of November 14.

She was prescribed methadone the next day and told she could leave, even though Mr Alleyne said she couldn't walk and needed help standing up.

He told the court he had been with Ms Hollands the entire time, except at one stage when he went to the Costa coffee shop – barely 40metres away from where she was being treated, he said – to get her some ice after her temperature started to rise.

Upon returning, he found she suffered a cardiac arrest, from which she never recovered.

Mr Alleyne told the court he thought the quality of care provided by the hospital was "poor".

Ann Fleming, who carried out a post-mortem on Ms Hollands, gave the probable cause of death as a pulmonary embolism (PE) - a potentially fatal clot that can prevent blood reaching the lungs.

She told the court a recent ectopic pregnancy, tissue damage from the resulting surgery, Ms Hollands' weight and mobility could all have contributed to the fatal condition.

It would be difficult for doctors to diagnose the condition, Dr Fleming added.

Contrary to the testimonies of Mrs Smith and Mr Alleyne, A&E doctor Leyla Mohammed – who said Ms Hollands was her last patient before she ended her shift on the evening November 14 - told the court Ms Hollands reported to her no chest pain, shortness of breath or other symptoms consistent with pulmonary embolism.

"I did not consider that she was suffering from PE," Dr Mohammed said.

"The patient told me she was having methadone withdrawals.

"Patients know their symptoms best and I always rely on them when they have the capacity [to describe them]."

Dr Mohammed said when she finished her shift she informed staff of "management plans" for Ms Hollands but told the court there was no apparent threat to her life when she left, and that she was "shocked" to find out subsequently she had died.

The following morning, despite what her family claim were further complaints of chest pain and trouble breathing, staff at Darent Valley gave permission for the Priory Hill resident to leave the hospital, the court heard.

Kamran Khan was the consultant doctor in the A&E that morning.

The doctor, who first joined Darent Valley hospital in 2012, told the hearing at Gravesend's Old Town Hall that the A&E department was particularly busy on the day in question.

Dr Khan told the court he prescribed Mrs Hollands 40ml of methadone – a drug commonly used to help recovering heroin addicts.

Following an assessment while the patient slept, at around 3.30pm, Dr Khan told the court he decided she was ready to be discharged, adding that the patient had not informed him of any of her symptoms concerning chest pain or difficulty breathing.

Ms Hollands died later that night.

The inquest was due to run every day last week but is now well behind schedule after proceedings were adjourned on Wednesday until tomorrow (Monday) at the earliest.

The decision was made after Dr Khan disputed an admission by hospital chiefs that Ms Hollands had been "inappropriately discharged" and asked for leave to discuss evidence.

Both Mrs Smith and Mr Alleyne told the court Ms Hollands felt staff at the hospital had been "horrible" to her but did not disclose specific details.

Speaking outside court, Mrs Smith told KoS: "These few months have been horrendous.

"Darent Valley told us they would put their hands up and not hide anything from us and in the last six months they've distanced themselves more and more.

"But I'm not giving up.

"This is my daughter we're talking about, she's not here to fight her corner but I am.

"Every single day is a battle, I've got a seven-year-old granddaughter who cries every day because she can't believe her mummy's not here, that she misses her birthday and isn't in the audience to watch her school play.

"I think my daughter was labelled a druggie and a waste of time and they didn't expect what was going to follow."

Sister Ebony Hollands, 22, added: "I'm disgusted, I just want justice for my sister and my family.

"Her kids ask for her every day and it's just heartbreaking, I don't ever want another family to go through this.

"Now we can get some kind of closure and I just want the doctors and the staff who were there that night to just own up and say they're sorry."

A spokesperson for Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust declined to comment until the conclusion of the inquest, which should continue next week.



CONTROVERSY: Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford, where Sian Hollands died in November 2015

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Fishermen fear a catch during negotiations over Brexit

The traditional industry has been in a steady decline for years, but after hopes coming out of the European Union would provide a more level playing field, many suspect we may sign up to yet more restrictions on what can be caught

By Adele Couchman
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FISHERMEN around the Kent coast are fearing for the survival of the industry after Brexit as they do not believe the government will deliver a clean break with the EU.

The Thanet Fishermen's Association and Whitstable Fishermen's Association have thrown their weight behind a 90 page document by Fishing for Leave, an independent campaign aiming for withdrawal from existing EU fishing regulations in order to regain control over the country's fishing waters and rejuvenate the industry.

Following Theresa May's speech on Brexit last month, chairman of the Thanet Fishermen's Association John Nichols went to Downing Street to meet fisheries minister George Eustice and Brexit minister David Jones.

He is campaigning for a complete repeal of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), with its quotas and principle of equal access to commercial fishing grounds for boats from all member states, often branded a disaster for Britain.

But even after the UK voted to leave on June 23, Mr Nichols and other fishermen around the county fear that the government will not have the UK fishing industry high on their priority list when it comes to Brexit negotiations.

Worse still, they foresee elements of the widely contested Common Fisheries Policy could be still be retained.

"My gut feeling is they will retain the CFP, and possibly sell us off like Edward Heath did in the 1970s when he gave away access to our waters as a trade off for the common market," said Mr Nichols, who took part in the pro-Brexit flotilla along the River Thames with Nigel Farage a week before June's referendum vote.

"The industry is a shadow of its former self," he adds, "in the 1970s we had really good opportunities, but they have slowly been eroded by the EU.

"Most of the fishermen are over 40 and they are coming up to retirement with no-one to take their place.

"Quotas just don't allow you to earn a sustainable living, so most industries have been passed down through the family rather than attracting younger people into the industry.

"Our main species is Dover sole, bass and cod. But we have been banned from catching bass this year on the grounds of conservation."

Quotas - known as the toal allowable catch - were introduced as part of the CFP to ensure protection of key fish levels to guard against over fishing. Each country is given a total amount it can fish in certain waters and that is then divided or traded among the member states. In addition, there are regulations over the size of each species caught to ensure fishermen do not kill young fish which will eventually breed to keep levels sustained.

Although it is not yet known whether the quota system will be dropped upon leaving the EU, Mr Nichols and other members of the Fishing for Leave campaign fear that Mrs May's plan to adopt EU laws into British law under the Great Repeal Bill could leave fishermen saddled with Brussels legislation.

In a House of Lords report released in December, it was found that the UK fishing industry will need continued EU markets if it is to thrive after Brexit.

It also warns that Britain may have to allow EU-registered boats to fish in UK waters as part of an overall deal, as well as suggesting that elements of the CFP should be retained.

Green MEP for the south east Keith Taylor agrees the UK will still have to agree on fishing quotas with its European neighbours post-Brexit. He also said the reformed Common Fisheries Policy helps, not harms the country's fishing stocks as it prevents over-fishing.

He told us: "The EU is phasing out the discarding of unwanted fish and setting quotas more in line with scientific advice.

"EU fishing quotas may attract controversy but they are often misunderstood. Fisheries ministers from across the EU work to set the limits, but it is UK government that is responsible for distributing the country's fishing quota.

"Shockingly, the UK government has decided to award a single giant Dutch-owned vessel a quarter of the English fishing quota. That is not an EU decision. In fact, alternative allocation systems advocated by some pro-Brexit groups are already in place elsewhere in Europe."

But Graham West of the Whitstable Fishermen's Association says EU-style quotas cannot continue if the industry is to survive.

"When we went into the common market, we had the largest fish stocks and the largest fleet," explains Mr West, who owns West Whelks on Whitstable harbour. "Now we have







HAUL: Fishing industry is still key around the coast, including Whitstable, top right, and Folkestone, right.

the smallest fish fleet and the smallest stocks left as our waters have been abused by other countries.

"At the moment we have 250kg quotas of skate a month when other boats are allowed to catch fives times that. What person wants to go to sea for 12 hours and earn £80?

"A lot of people that set the quotas are sitting in an office and haven't got a clue about how our industry works. We're told we are allowed to catch haddock, when we haven't seen a haddock in almost 50 years.

"At the moment we also have a cod quota, but the sea is too warm down here and there is not a cod in the sea - although in the north of England they have lots.

"Before you could catch what you want, and when they disappeared you would go onto something else.

"But now we have people sitting in an office telling us what we can and can't catch.

"What we need is a regional board involving four to five fishermen who really can fight for us

Continued on page 16



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Continued from page 15

and have an idea of what fish stocks are available in that area."

Long-term fishermen Bluey Walpole from Hollowshore Fisheries on the Swale estuary is also hoping that there will be an end to national quotas determined by the EU.

"I left school when I was 14 and then did an apprenticeship to become a fisherman, and I never agreed to going into the EU in the first place.

"People with a university education do not seem to understand how inshore fisheries work. They give us stupid quotas at stupid times of the year.

"I get a feeling that I have spent the majority of my life being walked over."

His eldest son Julian Walpole, who is a fisherman in Queenborough, added: "Theresa May hasn't quite made it clear what she is up to, and until we start hearing answers from her we don't know what is quite going on with the fishing industry.

"British waters should be fished by British boats, but fisheries are already saying we will have to use Europe's rules and regulations because we don't know our own. Until we start contracting our rules locally it won't get any better.

"There are too many people telling us what we should and shouldn't do, but the truth is scientists who devise these rules just don't understand."

As well as campaigning for fishermen to have more of control of their own stocks, South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay says he will be fighting for a better deal for smaller scale fishermen.

Smaller quotas are dished out to boats under 10 metres long, which



primarily makes up the fleet in Kent. Because of these restrictions, fishermen have reported a huge decline in industry in fishing towns like Folkestone, Ramsgate and Whitstable.

Explains the Conservative MP: "In Ramsgate, we have many small scale fishermen who are extremely environmentally friendly but are dished out appallingly low quotas.

"The under 10m boats are also attractive for the tourist industry, as people like to come and see some of the old fashioned fishing boats.

"What we need are hourly based quotas where whatever you catch you keep to ensure the survival of the industry."

He added: "Skate is a crucial stock, particularly in Ramsgate. But as they are protected across the EU, you can hardly catch any of them.

"The fishermen are reporting that they are seeing lots of them, so it would make sense if they were able to manage our own stocks locally."

MP for Canterbury and Whitstable Sir Julian Brazier said although the number of fishing vessels had dramatically declined over the years, Brexit represented a "real opportunity" to rebuild our fishing industry.

"I think the EU has been a disaster for fishing and that's why so many fishermen have come to parliament to protest," he said.

"Whilst we need to re-assert our territorial waters, we don't need to exclude everyone and our new deal is likely to be better.

"There has to be something done about a system where we throw fresh, dead fish over the side.

"What we also need is a better deal for smaller vessels, as at the moment too much quota is taken up by the larger vessels."

Speaking of potentially keeping some elements of the widely contested CFP, Mr Brazier added: "Overall it's in our national interest to negotiate where we can, but only we should decide what elements we should keep.

"It's important to recognise that fishing has been hammered by the EU. It will take us years and years to turn it around, but now we are taking charge of it."

Despite scepticism from fishermen around the county, the chief executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations Barrie C. Deas said he was confident fishing would be given priority by ministers in Brexit negotiations.

"When the UK is out of the EU, that also means we will come out of the disastrous CFP.

"That doesn't mean to say our area can't be shared, but we will have international fishing negotiations not dictated by Europe.

"But at the moment we are governed by EU law which means in the eastern Channel, 84 per cent of the cod quota goes to France and only nine per cent goes to the UK.

"The deal we got in the 1970s and 80s was so unfair, where fishermen weren't given political priority and sacrificed to bigger economic interests, and areas like Kent did the worst when the quotas were introduced as they weren't part of a bigger federation who would stand up for their interests.

"But we met with David Davis in August and he said fishing will be high up on the negotiations with the EU, so I believe Brexit gives us an opportunity to fix that."

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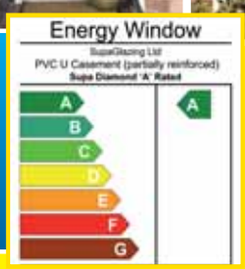


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MP slammed on Brexit bill vote for 'looking after number one'

Business secretary Greg Clark saw his Tunbridge Wells constituency be the only one in Kent to vote remain in the referendum...but he opted to back Brexit bill in this week's vote

By Emily King
Emily.King@archant.co.uk



MP: Greg Clark says he was simply abiding by the EU result



VOTE: The controversial Brexit bill debate and vote took place on Wednesday night at the House of Commons

MP for Tunbridge Wells Greg Clark has been slammed as "disingenuous" by a leading Liberal Democrat councillor, who claims Mr Clark "only voted for triggering Article 50 to look after his ministerial career".

This week, all of Kent's MPs voted in favour of legislation allowing prime minister Theresa May to begin Brexit negotiations.

The vote in the House of Commons was the result of a verdict from the Supreme Court which stated that parliament should be consulted before the process of leaving the European Union begins.

But while the rest of Kent voted to leave the EU in June's referendum, Tunbridge Wells was the only constituency in the county wanting to remain - with the vote seeing 55 per cent in favour of remaining - a choice also preferred by its MP. It thus left business secretary Mr Clark facing the challenge of either following the decision of his constituents or toeing the party line.

Speaking to KoS last year, he refused to be drawn on his voting intentions, but on Wednesday night voted for the bill.

The European Union (notification of withdrawal) bill will allow Mrs May to invoke Article 50 of the EU treaty, and was backed in total by 498 MPs to 114 in a vote on Wednesday night in the Commons.

The only other Kent MP not to back the government was Thanet North's Sir Roger Gale - but not through choice. He was unable to vote as he was chosen to chair the committee stage of the bill.

After keeping a low profile after the vote, Mr Clark said in a statement on Friday: "I am a democrat. We had a UK-wide referendum on membership of the EU and I always said that I would abide by the result.

"Although I campaigned to remain, the majority voted to leave so we must begin negotiations with the EU. To begin negotiations, Article 50 must be invoked and so of course I will vote to do so.

"My role as business secretary is to work hard and constructively to get the best possible deal so that we can continue to enjoy a strong, positive and successful relationship with our European neighbours. If done with intelligence, patience and courtesy, I believe this is possible and I will do everything I can to achieve it."

But it enraged opposition parties in Tunbridge Wells.

Liberal Democrat councillor for the St James ward, Ben Chapelard, was stinging in his views.

He told KoS: "His vote shows his loyalty to the prime minister takes priority over anything else. Because she's given him his cabinet post, it shows he's a Westminster man in Tunbridge Wells, rather than a Tunbridge Wells man in Westminster.

"He has been completely disingenuous.

"He only voted for triggering Article 50 to look after number one – his ministerial career. He's a career politician. He has no connection with Tunbridge Wells, he has just been placed there for his own benefit.

"He's out there doing Nigel Farage's bidding instead of standing by his priniciples."

Nationally, the Liberal Democrats were staunchly opposed to leaving the EU and have been calling for another referendum to decide on the final Brexit deal.

Cllr Chapelard added: "We've accepted that we will come out of the European Union, but we think the people deserve a say on the deal we make, otherwise we're going to end up with resentment from both sides and the public are going to think the political elite have just gone straight above their heads."

Charlie Elphicke, MP for Dover, who had voted remain, made it clear to the Commons, before the vote, that he had the best wishes and intentions for his constituents in mind, and that he would work hard to deliver the Brexit that they asked for.

He said: "For centuries Dover has had an important role as the gateway and guardian of the kingdom.

"So in the referendum campaign I was concerned about the potential impact on border security, the impact on cross-border cooperation, the potential impact on trade, because Dover is, in a very real sense, on the frontline.

"I set out these concerns to my constituents as well as my concerns about the medium-term risks to the economy.

"There was a referendum and after a long debate, a thorough debate, people knew what they were voting for, and they made a clear decision.

"My constituents are very clear, number one: There must be an end to unchecked EU migration, number two: No more billions for bloated Brussels bureaucrats, and that means very clearly that we must leave the single market and if we want to do trade deals with the rest of the world, we need to leave the customs union.

"For Dover that has a real impact, I make no bones for that, and that's why I am working hard to make this work.

"I have put together proposals as to how we can restore border patrols at Dover effectively, I have put together a group on how we can manage customs leaving the European Union in two years and how we can be ready on day one, and it is the job of this house and each and every one of its members not just to respect the result but to make it work for the good of the British people."

Following the clearing of the first hurdle in parliament, the main Commons skirmishes over the legislation will come during its committee stage from this coming Monday to Wednesday, when MPs will scrutinise the bill in detail and put forward amendments for votes.

The third reading of the bill, its final Commons stage, is expected on Wednesday February 8, and will give MPs a final chance to say whether they approve of the bill before it passes to the House of Lords, where the stages are repeated.

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Mixed messages muddy the real issue over transgender

Medway author says one in 100 feel they were born into the wrong gender, but that a host of "misconceptions and ignorance" is making it hard to 'come out'

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk



THE common perception of transgender people remains that of "ignorance and misconception", claims an author who says there could be as many as 17,000 in Kent alone.

Declan Henry, a social worker from Gillingham who has recently penned a book about the issue, believes "one in 100 people are transgender".

Transgender is defined as someone whose identity and sense of gender does not correspond to the sex they were born to.

But Mr Henry insists barriers are beginning to come down and that "within 10 years everyone will know somebody who is transgender".

In his book, Trans Voices, which was written following interviews with over 100 trans people, he hopes it will help educate the public as to the issues involved.

Speaking to KoS, he explained: "The majority of people will never have met a transgender person, although many will have seen a TV programme about a trans person.

"Most people are still relatively new to this concept and as a result there remains a lot of curiosity, ignorance and misconceptions about the reasons why a man would ever desire to become a woman or why a woman would ever desire to become a man, and what the terminology used actually means."

Dr Jane Hamlin, a transsexual woman, and the secretary of the national Beaumont Society for the trans community, explained further: "Transgender is an umbrella term for anyone who adopts a gender other than that of their birth gender.

"Transsexual is more specific however. A transsexual is someone who, in legal and medical terms and under the Equality Act 2010, proposes to undergo or has undergone gender reassignment surgery."

Although reassignment surgery - a procedure whereby the patient receives the genitals of the gender they choose to identify as - cannot take place until they are at least 18, it is becoming more common for trans people to come out at an early age, and Mr Henry claims this often results in the misconception that their declaration is a "phase".

"It is not a phase, or a lifestyle choice," reaffirms Dr Hamlin. "People think you choose to do this, but you don't choose it any more than you choose to be left handed. Many people suppress their feelings because of society, even though it's more relaxed now than it ever has been. People still feel like they can't be as they should be."

Following the airing of a recent BBC Two documentary, Transgander Kids: Who Know's Best?, criticism has flown towards parents who 'rush' to put the label on their child.

Mr Henry says: "No young person is rushed, because they simply can't be. They have to go through thorough psychological assessments before they're allowed to start hormone treatment, and even then, they have to live openly as a transgender person for a year before they can have surgery. Although if they're younger than 18, they'll have to wait even longer than that."

Speaking of her own experience, Dr Hamlin says it took years for her to finish her transition to womanhood.

"I first saw my GP in the October, and I was extremely lucky that he was so understanding and non-judgemental. I was then referred to the gender clinic the following February and had appointments every six weeks with psychiatrists, until they believed I was a 'serious' case, at which point I was then placed on hormone treatment.

"After being on hormones for a year I was referred to another specialist who diagnosed me with severe gender dysmorphia and pointed me towards the surgeon. Two years later, having lived officially as a woman and after changing my name, I had my surgery. That was five years ago now.

"The real danger here is that the waiting list can be so long, or they can be fearful of telling their GP, that people will buy hormones from the internet instead, risking their health," she added.

Another common misconception is that gender identity and sexuality are linked.

"Society often thinks a transgender individual is a gay person dressed up, but this is very untrue," says Mr Henry.

Dr Hamlin reiterates: "It's not true that if you are transsexual you are gay. You can be born a man, who has a wife and children, but truly identifies as a woman, and goes through

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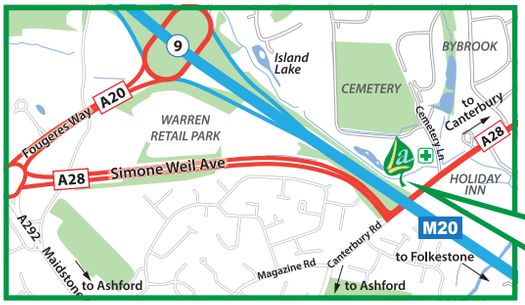
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QUESTION: How people identify with their gender and the impact on relationships can be a real challenge

gender reassignment, but that still loves and is sexually attracted to her wife. We, like any other community, have homosexuals within our group, but that doesn't mean that we all are homosexual."

Yet the statistic of one in 100 people being transgender will lead to many raising an eyebrow. Especially as the issue only recently appears to have emerged in the public consciousness.

Dr Hamlin explains: "The biggest fear for most transgender people who are hiding their real identity is that they will be rejected by the people they love. One woman I spoke with here at Beaumont was completely cut off by her mother when she came out, and then her mother also told the woman's siblings that if they tried to keep in contact she would cut them off as well.



AUTHOR: Declan Henry

"But people are also terrified of humiliation by strangers. Society is scared of what it doesn't understand, and with that comes hostility and abuse. That's why it is so important that we raise awareness and cure ignorance. Personally, I've been very lucky. I've had some abuse shouted at me in the street but nothing more than that."

Author Mr Henry added: "It's a really big deal for people to come out, and it's often the case that when they do they receive various amounts of abuse.

"The police are very good at taking trans people seriously and they really do have the law on their side because there are specially trained officers to deal with these kind of hate crimes. None of my interviewees ever criticised the police."

According to Mr Hamlin, questions trans people are regularly asked are "what if you change your mind?", or "what if you later regret your surgery?"

But he adds: "I didn't meet a single person who regretted their decision.

"Whereas before they came out some of them struggled with anxiety and depression, once they came out it was like a weight had been lifted off their shoulders. All of them felt relieved. The mental health issues associated with transgender people are often caused by not being or becoming who they really are."

Dr Hamlin confirmed: "I felt great when I came out, the pressure on my chest was released and I was able to fully embrace my true identity and gender."

Yet it remains that however hard it is to reveal they are trans to friends and family, that news can be a major shock to friends and family and one which is difficult for them to copmrehend.

"There are societies out there like Beaumont Partners and Spouses to lend support for people in that situation," says Dr Hamlin. "But what I would advise is that if someone you know explains they are trans, you just listen to them when they're telling you. Talk to them about it and about how they feel. Reassurance is the key thing, you need to tell them that you loved them as the gender they were born as, and that you love them still."

Trans Voices by Declan Henry is published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers as an e-book. For information visit declanhenry.org.





How Leeds Castle and a visit by JFK inspired White House

As Donald Trump settles into life in America's seat of power, it has emerged some of the most recognisable interior design took its inspiration from Kent



By Tom Pyman
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THE redecoration of a number of rooms in Donald Trump's new home, the White House, last century took inspiration from one of Kent's most iconic landmarks, it has emerged.

And one of its most famous former residents, John F. Kennedy, visited the county as a house party guest just before the Second World War.

The fascinating history, unbeknownst to many, has been revealed by heritage bosses at Leeds Castle, near Maidstone, which was built in 1119.

The state rooms at the castle are home to the type of interior design so inspirational, it warranted mirroring at arguably the most important building in the world.

Some of the designs are still seen whenever the commander-in-chief addresses the United States, and indeed the world, at White House media events, meaning the likes of Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Ronald Reagan have all appeared on camera in front of designs first appearing here in Kent.

It began in 1933 when Olive, Lady Baillie, the Anglo-American heiress and owner of Leeds Castle, launched an intense client-decorator relationship with Stéphane Boudin - of influential decorating house Jansen - spanning three decades and involving several houses including her London residence.

From 1935 Boudin embarked upon what was to be one of his most celebrated interiors with the redecoration of Leeds Castle featuring Louis XV-style panelling, which fooled even the greatest connoisseurs of period architectural detail.

Frenchman Boudin was to become one of the best designers of the 20th century with clients including crown princes of Europe and famously the Kennedys for the redecoration of the White House from 1961 until 1963.

The interior designs featured in a television documentary presented by JFK's wife, Jackie, and achieved near-iconic status in the history of American decorative arts and design.

In 1936 at Leeds Castle, in place of the former breakfast room, Boudin and Lady Baillie created a large drawing room, with antique yellow damask upholstered walls, capped by a Baroque design continuous quilted valance – or lambrequin – which was elaborately detailed with ornamental tapes and tassels.

The same French textile manufacturer Tassinari & Chatel, who created a yellow silk damas design for Lady Baillie, also produced the yellow silk curtain, Lampas 'Maison Blanche', for the East Room in the White House, a design which can still be seen today on curtains behind the president and heads of state during press conferences.

The state and ground-floor rooms of the White House borrowed details from previous Jansen commissions, including the library and dining room of Leeds Castle, serving as inspiration for their White House counterparts.

The distressed blue and white scheme of the panelled Vermeil Room was based on that of Lady Baillie's bedroom at Leeds Castle.

In the newly released film about JFK's wife, 'Jackie', Natalie Portman's Mrs Kennedy speaks of the "historical significance of objects and artefacts, perhaps more so than humans, for standing the test of time, for their beauty and style.

"It is through redecoration [of the White House interiors] that we are able to meet the figures that shaped our history."

The association between the Kennedys and Lady Baillie extends beyond interior design; in November 1938 JFK visited Leeds Castle as a house party guest with his elder brother Joseph Kennedy and his sister Kathleen, later to become Lady Hartington.

In June 1939, Joseph and Kathleen returned to Leeds Castle with the president's sister Eunice who, according to the Leeds Castle visitor book, recalls her brother Joe playing tennis with other members of the party.

The legacy and conservation of Boudin's designs continue today, as the heritage team at Leeds Castle oversees redecoration works in the Yellow Silk Drawing Room from January to March 2017.

Last month, Zenzi Tinker Conservation, a highly respected textile conservator, removed the lambrequin from the drawing room walls for conservation cleaning.

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FAMOUS: White House interior design drew on inspiration from Leeds Castle. Inset, assassinated president JFK

RENOVATION: Work at Leeds Castle has seen rooms decorated at the behest of Lady Baillie be cleaned and improved as part of on-going work at the castle near Maidstone

The castle curator was delighted to discover original labelling on the reverse of the fabric describing the object.

The cleaning will take some weeks and will be in three stages including a dry brush vacuum, solvent cleaning with each tassel cleaned individually, rinsing and drying.

Meanwhile, Tassinari & Chatel have been commissioned to create a new antique yellow damask wall fabric matching Boudin's original design, as the original has significantly deteriorated beyond repair.

The Yellow Silk Drawing Room re-opens to the public in April.

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Alternatives to food and roses this Valentine's

Next weekend lovers across the county will be looking to find the perfect day out to impress ahead of February 14. We take a look at some of the different options to woo your beloved in style

RESTAURANTS are bracing themselves for one of the busiest nights of the year this month as the county becomes gripped in Valentine's Day fever.

The annual opportunity to demonstrate your love to your nearest and dearest is either all a rather cynical marketing ploy or one of the most eagerly anticipated dates on the calendar.

But aside from simply going out for a romantic meal, or presenting your beloved with a bunch of red roses, there are plenty of other ways to get in a romantic mood ahead of the big day. Here are just a few...



Take a trip on the train

It is unlikely those who take the 7.06 Tonbridge to Charing Cross service every morning would leap at the chance of climbing on board a train during their precious free time, but there's plenty more to life on the rails that the delights of South-eastern or Southern's mainline rail services.

And what could be more romantic than boarding a steam train for a trip through our county's glorious countryside?

There's the Kent and East Sussex Railway, the Spa Valley Railway and plenty more besides that can put the steam back into your relationship. And if size isn't everything, then why not head to the Romney Marsh, Hythe and Dymchurch light railway instead?



Get on your bikes and ride

Now, if the weather is freezing cold or there are gales afoot, taking to a bit of pedal power may not be your first option. But, if it's calm then there can be few better ways to spend some quality time and enjoy the great outdoors than by jumping on your bike and heading on to one of the county's dedicated cycle paths. There you can enjoy the countryside of the coast, while getting the blood pumping with the one you love. There's an almost complete route around the coast which avoids you having to take to the roads, and if you're peckish en route, well you can grab that romantic meal as you go. Check out Sustrans.org.uk for a full map of all the key cycle routes in the county.



Take a seat

Going to the theatre is always a rather romantic experience. After all, it's a little bit more sophisticated than simply heading to your local cinema to catch the latest blockbuster, and the opportunity to have a glass of wine before and during the performance can make it a far more cultured trip out rather than simply chowing down on a box of popcorn.

And Kent has plenty of shows on for Valetine's Day to generate a bit of heat. At the Marlowe, star of Strictly Come Dancing Brendan Cole will be working up a sweat, while at Dartford's Orchard Theatre you can see it all hang out with the musical production of The Full Monty. Check the box office for tickets.



Get arty

Now, going round the Turner Contemporary art gallery does require at least a drop of artistic interest or you will really find yourself kicking your heels. But the good news is that the Margate gallery isn't actually very big, so a jaunt round it, even for those with little appreciation for creative endeavour, can show willing to your partner with a taste for the finer things in life, and be out in an amount of time which allows you to go and do plenty of other things with your afternoon or evening. And Margate certainly has lots to offer, with its reinvigorated Old Town and mass of bars and restaurants.



Be king or queen of the castle

When it comes to romance, it takes quite a lot to beat the majestic splendour of a castle - wrapped up in fascinating history and the perfect place to stroll hand-in-hand around on Valentine's Day.

From the sweeping beauty of Leeds Castle to the splendour of Hever Castle, which opens its doors again next Saturday in time to welcome lovers to its grounds and even gives you the chance to stay and enjoy one of its special Valentine's packages, there are plenty of great places to enjoy.

Or perhaps you'd rather the more sedate Walmer Castle, or the sheer drama of Dover Castle? Either way, they'll make you love history and Kent almost as much as you love each other.



Get locked up

Admittedly, being locked in a room with your other half for an hour, may not sound like fun for everyone, but the escape game phenomenon is growing and is the perfect way for your partnership to be demonstrated with a bit of clever thinking and deductions. The premise is simple, you pay your money and then get locked in a room and told you must solve a mystery within 60 minutes using only the clues within the room. Normally, it's about finding number codes to unlock padlocks. But it requires teamwork and is surprisingly good fun. What's more, there's a growing number in Kent. From Escape Room Live in Chatham, to The Panic Room in Gravesend, Time Quest in Paddock Wood and Escape and Escape Plan in Canterbury there's one near you. Be quick, though, they book up fast.



Go wild

No relationship is complete without a certain element of monkey business, and the good news is that Kent has plenty of opportunities for you to do just that.

There are the Port Lympne and Howletts wild animal parks, for starters, which can offer you monkeys, lions, tigers, elephants and much more besides. Take a relaxing stroll and admire the magnificent beasts. Or perhaps go and take in the birds of prey at Eagle Heights in Eynsford, Wingham Wildlife Park or Wildwood, near Canterbury. After all, a good relationship needs a touch of the animal once in a while doesn't it?



Take in the sand and pebbles

When it comes to big romantic gestures, you don't always need to splash the cash. After all, when it comes to classic romantic jaunts, why not simply head to the coast and take a stroll along the beach?

Granted, the weather may be a little distracting, but wrap up warm and walk arm-in-arm with your loved one and you may find it proves just the tonic. There's plenty of sandy beaches so the brave can kick off their shoes and go for a paddle - it may prove chilly, but it will be a walk to remember. And isn't that the point of Valentine's Day?



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LOCAL MEDIA WORKS



VENUE: Dreamland is the new home to the alternative music festival which previously was based in Brighton

2-4-6-8 Thanet Way...Tom Robinson headlines festival

The Undercover Festival confirms its eclectic line-up for Dreamland debut

SINGER-songwriter Tom Robinson - best known for his hits 2-4-6-8 Motorway and War Baby - has been confirmed as the headliner for the Undercover Festival at Margate's Dreamland later this year.

The event is shifting from its regular home in Brighton to the Thanet seaside resort for its fifth annual outing.

The two-day festival, which describes itself as "one of the best small alternative festivals the south has to offer" takes place over September 8-9.

Other performers include Eddie and the Hot Rods, Doctor and the Medics, the Angelic Upstarts, Ruts DC and Geno Washington and the Ram Jam Band.

Festival goers will be able to experience the rides at the park with all performances taking place undercover.

Explained Organiser Mick Moriarty: "With the latest additions we have finally put in place a line-up that we believe is packed with bands that should appeal to most that like their music alternative. We believe we have most bases covered and we guarantee an X Factor Free zone as there is no place for that on our stages.

"Preparations are going well and ticket sales are up on last year.

"We believe the usual run-of-the-mill festivals tend to book bands that in the main are broadly similar – and way too safe. We try for a line up and experience that is something different and appeals to a crowd definitely not catered for elsewhere.

"Being a small independent grassroots festival is tough because media attention is always on the big boys. But we've got through to our fifth year and we're going strong because what we have created really has struck a chord with people who like their music raw and full of the passion and energy that only acts like ours generate."

The Undercover Festival grew out of a small tent tucked in the back corner of the now departed GuilFest in Surrey. Tickets cost £75 for the two-days and are on sale now.

Kent's festival scene has undergone something of a shake-up over recent years.

Gone are previous summer highlights such as the Hop Farm Festival in Paddock Wood - which attracted the likes of Prince, Morrissey, Bob Dylan, Lou Reed and Ray Davies - and Canterbury's popular Lounge on the Farm, which included sets by Ellie Goulding, Nile Rodgers, Emeli Sande, Soul II Soul, Fun Lovin' Criminals and The Vaccines.

While two incarnations of the Hop Farm buckled under financial pressures, Lounge had been expected to return this summer - but as yet there appears to be no movement on when - or where it could be held. It was forced to leave its regular home at Merton Farm after nine years following its last outing in 2014.

More recently, the county has played host to the rock extravaganza of Mote Park's The Ramblin' Man Fair in Maidstone, which has showcased the likes of Whitesnake, Hawkwind and Europe, and A New Day in Faversham which this year stars Big Country and Uriah Heep among others.

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Women Seeking

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SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424781**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

LIVELY 53 year old female, young in mind, wants discreet fun, loves gardening, dancing music etc and more. **Text only. Mailbox: 5763284**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

CARLY, 34yrs, attractive and discreet military wife seeks no strings fun with respectable gent. **Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box 424419**

ATTRACTIVE well educated lady, mid 30's, solvent, professional, seeks discreet broad minded gent. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 425891**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337**

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422469**

SUE, genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424673**

SARAH, 39yrs, married, seeking chap for no strings intimate times. Special friendship, mutual respect. Give me a call. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 408291**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339**

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OCTAVIA, black seductress, 53yrs, waiting to meet you. Pls text me today. **Text Only. Mailbox: 4090520**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327**

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CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424783**

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424775**

BRUNETTE lady, 70, slim, sophisticated, size 10, kind of like Helen Mirren as a brunette, lives near Tunbridge Wells, WLTM a genuine, hopefully family oriented gentleman, for genuine friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424877**

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424777**

PHILIPPA, feminine open minded lady seeking adult fun, genuine responses only pls, no time-wasters. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4030610**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

JULIE, 53yrs, tall slim dark haired lady, sociable and fun loving. New to the area so WLTM men friends for fun, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424497**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424495**

PRESENTABLE divorced lady, young 60, many interests, animal lover, seeks outgoing, cheerful, honest, smart looking man, for cultural times. **Text only Mailbox: 5576629**

SUE, outgoing lady, enjoys life, likes meals, holidays, WLTM mature gentleman to share interests and spend quality time together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424669**

CLARE, 41, attractive, lovely eyes, nice figure, smoker, likes beach walks, socialising, occasional gigs, WLTM a nice gent, any age over 40, for wining and dining, to be my soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424595**

CALLING all Gentlemen! I'm Janet a mature solvent stylish lady, I'm waiting for you to call me so we can wine/dine and have some good times ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424335**

HI I'm Angie, attractive petite mid 50s lady. I'm a very very active lady, with lots of interests. WLTM chap with GSOH, looks/age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424333**

WIDOW, 62, short, looking for friendship at present, interested? Ha ha got to phone to find out more! Call Jan. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424195**

WENDY, 44yrs, dark haired beauty with blue eyes and a fab figure. WLTM gent any age, give me a call and I promise to call you back, or text/email. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424339**

MELANIE, 49yrs, varied interests, attractive, sensual lady seeks gent any age or status, call, see what happens. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424337**

Men Seeking

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GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some tlc with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fares, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207**

JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTM slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MALE 50 seeks mature, homeloving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**



LIVELY old boy, ohoc, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

GENTLEMAN, 76yrs old, clean shaven with a good head of hair and a smart dresser, hoping to meet lady for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423645**

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388372**

BRIAN, 6ft3, fit, bit grey but genuine and kind, looking for a naughty female, for no strings adult fun, if you're interested please get back to me, aca. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423483**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

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ANDREW, 50, slim to medium build, lives in Ashford/Kent area, WLTM a women, 40-70, for discreet fun, would be great to hear from you so get back to find out more! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423271**

TALL single early 60's male looking for pure hearted lady for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5496781**

MALE, 53, 5ft6, single, hardworking, looking for slim/small lady, 40-56. Maidstone, Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423363**

OUTGOING male, seeking attractive female, likes sports, music, cinema and nights out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414793**

GARY, 53, caring, likes snooker, bowls, looking for a nice woman to meet and fall in love with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423145**

Gay Seeking

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JAMES, 34, seeks dominant, slim, Canterbury/Thanet male, 30-40, likes reading, music, walking, films, eating out, nights in, looking for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424485**

GAY guy, friendly with a GSOH, likes sport and art, WLTM similar guy for a relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425563**

SIMON, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4196422**

Friends

SEEKING ladies for good company, socialising and a bit of fun, BBW local to Kent, get in touch and lets start having fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413623**

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

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One-man show on the magic and friendship of comedy icons

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk



LEGEND: Jeffrey Holland as the one and only Stan Laurel in his one-man stage show

FOR those of a certain vintage, or simply an appetite for divine comedy timing, then the magic of Laurel and Hardy will not be a stranger to you.

Easy to dismiss the genius of the duo, they rose to prominance during the 1920s in silent movies then united to deliver a series of memorable shorts and feature length movies which captured the hearts of the world during their hey-day of the 1930s.

And it is the relationship between the two individuals who will forever be united in our collective memories which lies at the heart of a moving one-man stage show which heads to Tonbridge this month - performed by a man familiar to millions.

Jeffery Holland has been a regular on sit coms through the years - most notably as comic Spike in the long-running Hi-De-Hi and You Rang M'Lord. He also had roles in Dad's Army and Coronation Street.

But in recent years he has won critical acclaim for his show And This Is My Friend Mr Laurel.

Set in the bedroom of a sick - and ultimately dying - Oliver Hardy, the show takes place during Laurel's visit to his long time comedy partner and close friend.

In it, they recount their past success and lives in what is both a humorous and touching look at one of the great cinematic partnerships of the last century.

Oliver Hardy died in 1957 at the age of 65 after suffering several years of ill health and a major stroke. Stan Laurel, who was born and grew up in Lancashire before touring the US in 1910 in a company which included a young Charlie Chaplin, was devastated by his passing and refused to perform again - although remained loyal to the duo's fanbase, most notably always taking time to reply to letters from fans. He died in 1965 aged 74.

The duo famously appeared in Kent in 1947 as the star turns to open the Romney Hythe and Dymchurch light railway.

Mr Holland co-wrote the one-act play with award-winning writer Gail Luow and it has toured since first debuting back in 2013.

He will be performing at the EM Forster Studio at Tonbridge School on February 16. For tickets call 01732 304241 or visit the website tonbridgearts.com.

A banging concert opening



THE Garrison Artillery Volunteers will open this year's Leeds Castle Classical Concert with three Second World War guns on July 8.

For tickets visit the website leedscastleconcert.co.uk

Adventure film showcase

THE Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour, showcasing adventure films, is back and is making an appearence in Canterbury's Gulbenkian Theatre on March 29, and Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on April 1 .

For tickets visit thegulbenkian.co.uk, or assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

Busted sell-out concert



POP trio Busted have sold out their concert at Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall, two weeks before the Valentine's Day gig.

The concert follows the release of their first single in a decade, On What You're On.

Snooker legends charity

A FUNDRAISING snooker tornament last weekend saw snooker and comedy celebrities Ken Doherty, Stuart Bingham, and Bobby Davro climb behind the bar to pull pints and compete against locals at the Faversham Creek Hotel, resulting in over £2,500 being raised for the Little Haven Children's Hospice.



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Children's history novel



MAIDSTONE author Kathy Elkins has released a children's book called The History Sphere, which features her granddaughter and her dog.

It's available to purchase from amazon.co.uk

Cathedral organ rebuilt

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL has announced that its next organ season will take place from February 11 until July 22, and will be the last using the current organ before it is removed and rebuilt.

There is no need to book tickets, which will be available on the door for £6.

Drifters musical history



STAND BY ME, the musical history of The Drifters, a band which inspired rock and roll, is coming to Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on March 24.

For tickets visit the website: assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

Kent Uni lunchtime gigs

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY continues the spring series of lunchtime concerts on Wednesday February 8 in the Colyer-Fergusson Hall of the University of Kent in Canterbury.

The concerts start at 1.10pm and admission is free, with a suggested donation of £3. For more information, visit kent.ac.uk/music

Catch Russell Brand as he experiences Re:Birth

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk



LOVE him or loathe him, there's no ignoring Russell Brand and this year he will be bringing his stand-up show to a string of Kent theatres this year.

The talented performer - who has risen from comedian to TV presenter to DJ and Hollywood movie star - will be playing dates in Chatham, Margate, Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells as part of his Re:Birth UK tour.

The star will be talking media, politics, sex, fatherhood and death during the jaunt, which will, as usual, showcase his controversial brand of humour and opinion.

He said of the show: "How do we make sense of the madness of our lives once we become parents? What am I going to tell my daughter about conformity and responsibility? What happens if she grows up to be like me or, worse, date someone like me?"

Aside from stand-up, he is also a broadcaster, actor, author, podcaster, columnist, political commentator as well as a mental health and drug rehabilitation activist. He famously interviewed Ed Miliband, the then-Labour leader ahead of the 2015 general election, and was unceremoniously sacked from his BBC Radio 2 show in 2008 after he and guest Jonathan Ross left lewd messages on the answer phone of the now late Fawlty Towers star Andrew Sachs.

Despite the media furore around it, Brand continued to see his star rise, and he appeared in the likes of Forgetting Sarah Marshall and Get Him To the Greek which made him a famous face in the US too.

Re:Birth, which played to sell-out preview tours in November and December, will be at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on April 9, Chatham's Central Theatre on April 25, Margate's Winter Gardens on April 27, Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on May 29, and Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on September 20.

Tickets went on sale on Friday morning and were expected to sell quickly. Check the theatres to see if any remain.



HIT: He has performed major stand-up tours over the years



FILM: Starring in Forgetting Sarah Marshall



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'There are more fat 40-year-olds than chiselled'

Tom Kerridge talks to Keeley Bolger about losing 11 stone and boozy nights with his chef friends...

DIETING is a divisive subject, not least with the current debate surrounding clean eating, but chef Tom Kerridge is open-minded.

The cheerful TV foodie has lost 11st over the course of three years on his self-devised regime, bidding bye-bye to big boozy sessions with his 'naughty boy chef mates', exercising daily and skipping certain types of carbohydrates like potatoes and rice, in favour of high-protein food like meat and eggs, as well as plenty of leafy greens.

Now, he's sharing his recipes with the world in his latest cookbook, Tom Kerridge's Dopamine Diet: My Low-Carb, Stay-Happy Way To Lose Weight.

"There are so many different diets and so many things that appeal to so many different people," he says, in his distinctive Gloucestershire burr. "This diet is high-protein led, and might not suit somebody else.

"The key to it is finding the one that suits you," adds the 43-year-old. "That's really important. Fitness bloggers, people into eating raw food - it's great because it takes all sorts. The idea of eating loads of raw food; I couldn't stay on that for three years but there are other people who could, and there are people who couldn't stay on what I do for three years."

The fact he was able to stick to his diet - the first he's ever tried - for so long was partly because it embraces an unlikely snack.



WINNER: Tom Kerridge won The Great British Menu in 2011

"Pork scratchings contain no carbohydrate - they're all protein," he explains with a chuckle. "I've lost the best part of 11-stone while eating pork scratchings. That's got to be the perfect diet, surely!"

At over six foot, Kerridge, who made his name after winning The Great British Menu in 2011, made a pact with himself to become healthier before reaching his 40th birthday.

"It's not hard... There are more blokes like me - 40 years old, fat and bald - there's plenty of us around, more than there are 40-year-old, six-pack, chiselled-jaw geezers," he reasons.

"You think it's hard to say to your peer group but there are more of them that will embrace and understand it, and probably join you on the journey than you think. If I can do it, anyone can do it. I'm no different to anybody else. I just decided I needed to do something, and that's the difference."

And while he's soon to be seen in a new food BBC food series, the chef, who contributed to Bake Off's spin-off show, The Great British Bake Off: Creme de la Creme, rules out joining Paul Hollywood on the new series for Channel 4.

"For me, I love working with the BBC," says Kerridge. "I'm very happy working with them. I love what the BBC stand for and I love working for them, so at this point, I wouldn't."

The chef adds that his new lifestyle has made life as a dad easier for him and wife Beth.

Sister George's impact

WHEN a fictional radio series decides to kill off a popular character it has significant consequences for the actress playing her.

Already a big West End and movie hit, the Hilderstone Players bring their version of the Killing of Sister George to the Sarah Thorne Theatre in Broadstairs on February 17-19.

Tickets cost £11. To book, call the box office on 01843 863701.

Wax's Frazzled mind

COMEDIAN Ruby Wax is returning to the stage with her show Frazzled, and the much loved author and campaigner is bringing the show to Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on May 10.

She'll explore modern problems with mindfulness, based on her latest best-selling book, A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled.

For tickets visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or call 01892 530613.

Creepy crawly show

CHILDREN'S TV presenter Naomi Wilkinson is bringing her spring tour Wild and Scary to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on April 10.

She'll be recalling some of her most exciting wildlife experiences from the corners of the world, and even introduces the audience to some fierce and frightening animals she has met along the way.

For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

'Best folk duo' to visit

WINNERS of 2014's BBC Radio Two Folk Award for best duo, Phillip Henry and Hannah Martin, have come a long way on their journey, and now they're coming to St Edith Hall in Sevenoaks on March 3, and Hernhill Village Hall on March 4.

The pair bring together genres such as Indian classical music, the blues, and musics of the British Isles.

Tickets can be purchased on the door.

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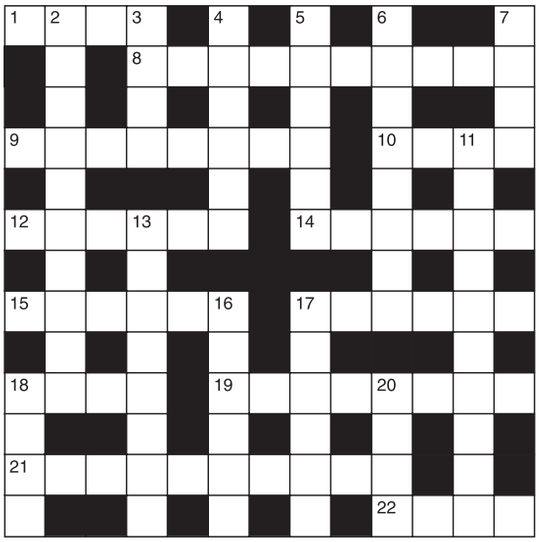


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PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

1. Conspiracy (4)
8. Sensible (10)
9. Supplant (8)
10. Salver (4)
12. Gratify (6)
14. Menace (6)
15. Verse (6)
17. Brigand (6)
18. Narcotic (4)
19. Grumble (8)
21. Eating house (10)
22. Otherwise (4)

Down

2. Lawmaker (10)
3. Excursion (4)
4. Contrive (6)
5. Powerful (6)
6. Inflexible (4-4)
7. Exceedingly (4)
11. Greedy (10)
13. Deny (8)
16. Increase (6)
17. Lament (6)
18. Repair (4)
20. Tardy (4)

Cryptic

Across

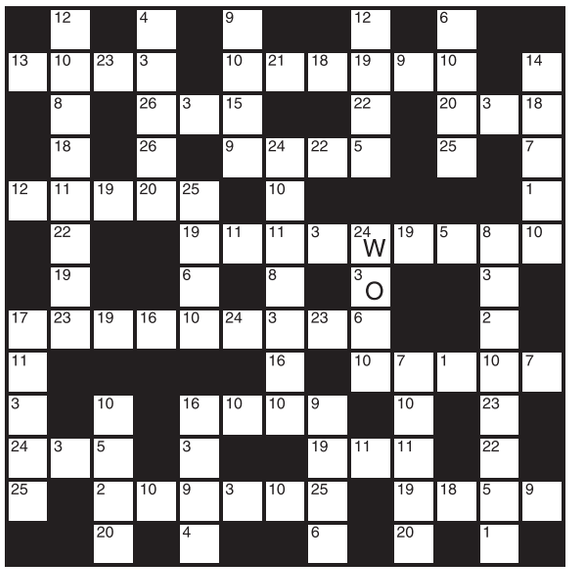
1. A die in fancy shape (4)
8. Praiseworthy features of a railway? (4,6)
9. Sailor sent to quarters for being a defaulter (8)
10. Seen in church when spring returns before Easter starts (4)
12. Alfred shortly returned married and marred! (6)
14. This column backs one up (6)
15. Indeed upset when refused (6)
17. Is able to copy something out of the cookery book (6)
18. Expensive address (4)
19. A record? Yes, of course (5,3)
21. Sign for a missing letter (10)
22. Being out of step he annoys one (4)

Down

2. Refuse to give credit? (10)
3. A complaint I'd not put in a guide (4)
4. Given the sack (6)
5. Yet one may be at one's lowest on them (6)
6. He owns land next to the bank (8)
7. A detachment from Paisley lose wages (4)
11. Yet they may be used when speaking bluntly (5,5)
13. She takes orders from anybody (8)
16. Abandon - it's a waste (6)
17. Gay as a lark? (6)
18. Collect one's pay with a minor rise (4)
20. A stage in the disposal of waste, perhaps (4)

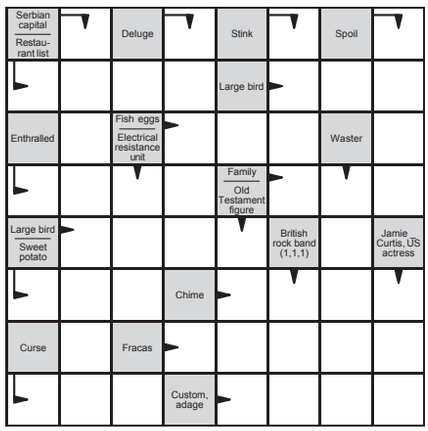
CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.





Arrowword

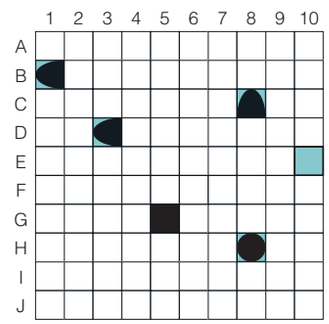


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

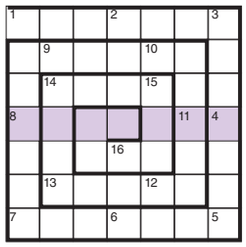
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine





Word Spiral



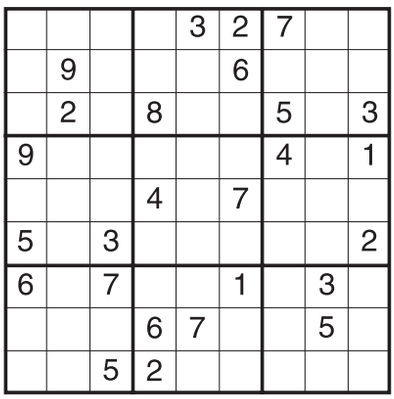
Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Affluent
2. Not soft
3. Information
4. Land measure
5. Discharge
6. Be inclined
7. Besmear
8. Poet
9. Highland dagger
10. Military cap
11. Greek letter
12. Among
13. Action
14. Extinct bird
15. Burden
16. Pudding ingredient

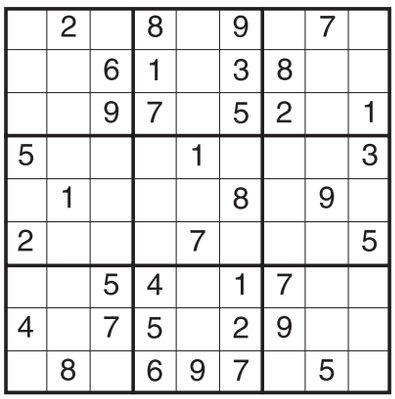
Keyword clue: A type of plant

SUDOKU

Hard



Easy

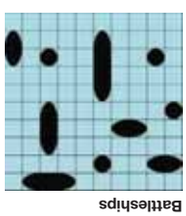


Solutions

Arrowword



Battleships



Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 1 Idea; 8 Good points; 9 Absentee; 10 Apse; 12 Flawed; 14 Spinal; 15 Denied; 17 Canape; 18 Dear; 19 Ship's log; 21 Apostrophe; 22 Pest. Down: 2 Disbeliew; 3 Ague; 4 Looted; 5 Uppers; 6 Riparian; 7 Isle; 11 Sharp words; 13 Waitress; 16 Desert; 17 Chirpy; 18 Drew; 20 Step.

Quick
Across: 1 Plot; 8 Reasonable; 9 Displace; 10 Tray; 12 Please; 14 Threat; 15 Stanza; 17 Bandit; 18 Drug; 19 Complain; 21 Restaurant; 22 Else. Down: 2 Legislator; 3 Trip; 4 Manage; 5 Potent; 6 Cast-iron; 7 Very; 11 Avaricious; 13 Abnegate; 16 Accrue; 17 Bemoan; 18 Darn; 20 Late.

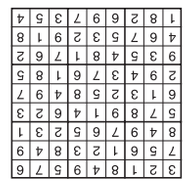
Codeword
1=G, 2=V, 3=O, 4=H, 5=N, 6=K, 7=D, 8=C, 9=T, 10=E, 11=L, 12=F, 13=Z, 14=J, 15=X, 16=M, 17=F, 18=U, 19=A, 20=Y, 21=Q, 22=I, 23=R, 24=W, 25=S, 26=B

Word Spiral
1 Rich; 2 Hard; 3 Data; 4 Acre; 5 Emit; 6 Tend; 7 Daub; 8 Bard; 9 Dirk; 10 Kept; 11 Iota; 12 Amid; 13 Deed; 14 Dodo; 15 Onus; 16 Sago. **Keyword:** Begonia



Sudoku - Hard

Sudoku - Easy



Captivating, clever **Cuba**

Now is the time to visit, says **Carole Lorking**

Cuba?" everyone said.

"Is it safe?"

Every holiday I take holds the slight fear of the unknown.

I enjoy that little fear, actually.

It reminds me that I'm alive.

I started having adventures a few years after my husband died. For some time after his death, I waited for other people to give me my new life. But I had to find it on my own.

My hotel in Havana was all baroque columns and colonial elegance. It had one of those old lifts with a sliding metal door.

Like so many things in Cuba, like the famous old cars, the culture ensures that when something breaks, it is mended. They probably do hearts as well, if required.

The Che Mausoleum in Santa Clara is visited in reverent silence. Your guide does not go in with you or tell you what to think.

You make of it what you will.



I did. I saw the children playing not with Ipads or Playstations but with bikes and a ball.

I saw them going to school each day in immaculate uniforms.

And students taking advantage of their free university education.

I saw the way people got around, waiting on corners with money in their hands, for one of the lorries to stop and give them a lift.

Someone always stopped. Helping people seemed the thing to do.

Outside their homes, people sat on their stoops, chatting. They looked at each other and seemed to really listen. Not a lot of shopping went on – there are few shops; it's all craft markets, and everything is made by hand.

Other highlights: I enjoyed a catamaran trip and rode an open top bus. In Havana – the Hemingway rooms at the Hotel Ambos Mundos were unmissable.

Wherever you go, there are men playing music; on street corners, in bars, outside cafés. Not for money; just for the love of it.

Cuba, don't change.

You have everything we long for already.

DON'T MISS!

Trinidad:
"Cobbled streets. Stunning architecture. Wonderful."

The Che Mausoleum in Santa Clara:
"You experience it in total silence. A strange and beautiful memory."

Ride in a pink Cadillac:
"£45 for an hour and worth every penny. When will I ever do that again?!"



FLIGHTS & HOTELS

- Carole flew with Virgin Airlines from Gatwick. Prices start at £599.
- The trip was a package organised through havanatour - booked by Fred. Olsen. Including flights, Carole paid around £2000 for her two week stay. For more info, visit www.havanatour.co.uk
- Carole stayed at Hotel Santa Isabel in Havana for three nights: www.hotelsantaisabel.com.
- She spent the rest of her stay at the Paradisus Princesa Del Mar Resort and Spa in Varadero. See www.paradisuscuba.com

OPEN MORNING
SATURDAY 11 MARCH

HIJKLMNO.*

Isn't it refreshing to think differently?

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Has Cllr Wells forgot Manston?

IN KoS two weeks ago, Chris Wells, leader of Thanet District Council said about Ramsgate harbour: "Some tell me its time to concrete over the port, and build houses there instead...I prefer to seek jobs from the assets we have available to generate them before adding to government imposed housing totals. It's called sustainability in planning jargon. For most of us with local knowledge, it's called common sense."

Does he not realise how maddening this is to airport supporters given this was his remit for the airport that got him elected?

Here's a plan then, now that Wells has Ramsgate port ready to Rock 'n' Ro-Ro; prove that it obviates Operation Stack by avoiding the French when necessary - then we don't need to build this obscene lorry park at Stanford, thereby saving £250 million which can be spent saving Manston Airport from carpetbaggers

Mike Thompson,
Waltham

Close Ramsgate and save animals

I WOULD like Ramsgate port closed for the sole reason it would halt the export of live animals being shipped out in sometimes treacherous weather conditions and untold road mileage to their destination.

Audrey Canter,
Hythe

Airport needs to be laid to rest

SURELY the test for Manston Airport is does any airline want to use it?

Past evidence suggests that the answer is no: Freight carriers pulled out, KLM pulled out - its attempt at using it as a feeder route to Schipol foundered - and previous investment of £20 million of Kent taxpayers' money was scattered to the four winds.

Isn't it time to let it go? Other investors are lining up to ensure the future of the site, but those stuck in their rear-view mirror seem to make all the noise.

Hugh Masters,
Pembury

Speed adds to the congestion

JUDGING from his last letter [KoS, 22.01] Terry Hudson's stubbornly inflexible attitude regard road traffic accidents seems to be that stuff happens, there's nothing we can do about it, so get over it.

Mr Hudson can, of course, scoff about 'slowing everybody down to farm tractor speeds' but is that such an undesirable thing in our must-have-it-this-instant, frentically-paced digital age?

So many speed related vehicle crashes now occur on our highways that his utopian vision of a free-flowing arterial network transporting motorsts punctually to their venue of choice has fallend spectacularly flat. Each time there's a serious accident on one of the motorways/A-roads, the whole network grinds to a halt.

It is widely because of the vastly extended length to journeys created by rampant globalisation that many people's travel time expectations have been forced to change so radically. Perhaps if Britain had retained a more patriotic approach to employment and trade then we wouldn't have lost the majority of our local amenities and accompanying job opportunities.

There would surely be no need to drive at a fast speed if our play of employment was still just a short distance along the road from the front door.

Clive Wilkins-Oppler,
Petham

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Major surgery, not a cash injection for NHS

RICHARD Bloom's heartfelt plea in last week's edition for more money to be spent on the NHS is honest and sincere but, ultimately, misplaced.

There is much wrong with the NHS and pouring more money into it is not the answer,

It needs a root and branch sort out; it needs to examine those things it can do properly, and needs to do, and divest itself of all those well-meaning initiatives that produce more pen-pushers and takes money away from essential services.

It needs to be free and clear of politicians - for too long it has been the football of competing political parties all of whom have betrayed the health of the nation in their shamelessness. One party in particular fosters the view that it is its sole custodian, but failed to do much in one of the most extended and continuous periods of office.

It really does need to sort out its bureaucracy right from the top and all those quangos that purport to run it, right down to the office worker who cannot be bothered to be at their desk to take my telephone call. It needs to sort out its sickness and absence rates. It needs to stop massaging the figures.

Its mantra 'free at the point of use' should change to 'free at the point of need', and it should drop the "free" - it's funded by taxpayers.

Any health service provider that believes problems can be solved by extending operating lists for three months needs to examine its remit. In my own experience three months is an additional three months' wait added to the pre-existing twelve months' wait.

It needs to get a grip of health tourism too, administrators are lazy by not charging, or do they believe it's beneath them?

At my age, if I became ill, I would have to ask myself: "Will I die before I am treated?"

Ralph Steerpike
Tunbridge Wells

Would we do such a thing?

PUTTING a Ray Duff missive as letter of the week [KoS, 22.01] was certainly mischievous - bound to generate bags of response from the usual channels, eh?

S Reeves,
Herne Bay

Er...yes, it's quite possible we did

DOES Ray Duff ever, ever draw breath in his wild swings across his usual swathe of subjects [KoS letters ad naseum]?

If he were to just pause and develop one single argument rather than try to demolish all his demons in one fell swoop, he may find that cohesion and, one would hope, moderation could develop.

But, just taking one of his swipes, climate, he states 14 of the past 15 years have been the warmest on record.

Records were started in this country only 350 odd years ago and, globally, in the late 19th century. These periods are not even flickers on the profile of the history of the Earth. The last Ice Age ended about 12,000 years ago, barely a nano-second, and lasted about two million years, a period that just about begins to be significant in the total history of the Earth.

Serious argument suggests that there is no "natural" temperature for the planet - it is either warming or cooling and, whilst I am not advocating the uncontrolled release of emissions into the atmosphere, we should be careful in how we go about its restraint and moderate in our opinions on it.

Edward Baker,
Tunbridge Wells

We need to talk about Brexit

H SMITH of Tonbridge [KoS, letters, last week] calls for a Brexit-free edition of KoS without giving any reason.

As this is this country's single most important event in the last 40-odd years, I would expect the healthy debate to run and run.

I am greatly heartened by the PM's uncompromising speech at Lancaster House recently, and I hope that further demonstrations of our resolve will follow from her in due course. It's time to re-assume the mantle and responsibilities of nationhood.

Ben Hardy,
Tunbridge Wells

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent



Seagulls at beach in Broadstairs

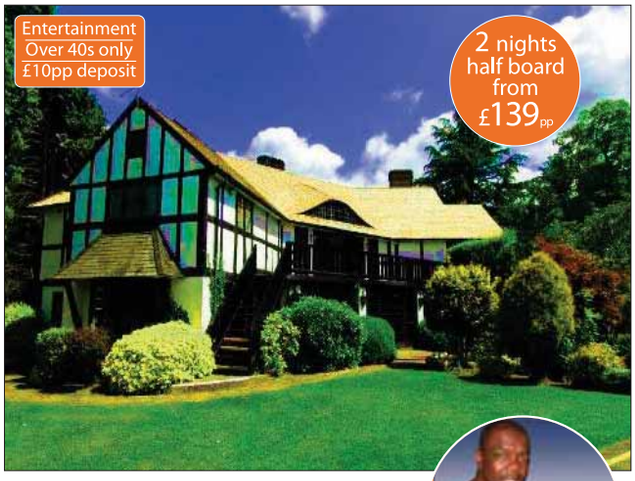
by **Brian Summers, from Faversham**

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holidays

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60s Sounds in Surrey

Thatcher's Hotel, Guildford

10 Feb, 10 Mar & 14 Apr, 2017 - Quote: TG-KOS

ENJOY a fun-packed party break at this charming Tudor-style hotel near Guildford, close to The Hogs Back Brewery, and Polesden Lacey, an Edwardian country house and estate. Entertainment on 10 Feb 2017 features The Beatle (Fab Four tribute) & comedy singer Ian Larkin – £139pp; 10 Mar 2017 with Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations) and Dave Grant (ex-Paper Lace) – £139pp;14 Apr 2017 (Easter) with the Frankie Valli Story & singing duo Bus Stop – £159pp.

INCLUDED: Entertainment both nights • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV, tea/coffee tray and free wifi • Free parking





Seaside 60s Sounds in West Sussex

Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing

31 March, 2017 • Quote: WG3-3-KOS

Join us in Worthing for an exclusive Party Weekend and enjoy £1 drinks and a 60s music tribute act each night, including Rob Wheeler 'The Beatle' and Steve Williamson 60s Motown sounds of the Drifters, The Stylistics, The Four Tops & The Temptations. The Chatsworth is one of the finest hotels on the south coast, just a stone's throw from the sea and a short stroll to the town centre. All bedrooms are en-suite and a lift services all floors.

INCLUDED: Happy Hour £1 drinks from 7pm to 8pm both evenings - pint of house beer or small glass of wine • Live entertainment both nights • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & free wifi • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts





Isle of Man Railways & Waterwheels

By Air from Gatwick

11 August, 2017 - Quote: IM8-KOS

A truly unique Island, the Isle of Man isn't part of the United Kingdom or the European Union but a possession of the British Crown. Situated between the coasts of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, in the middle of the Irish Sea, it boasts stunning coastlines, rich countryside and picturesque towns rich in folklore and culture. This holiday includes visits to Castle Rushem, Silverdale Glen Waterwheel and Peel and includes journeys on the Isle of Man Steam Railway, the Manx Electric Railway and the Snaefell Mountain Railway.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Return flights with hand luggage to the Isle of Man from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4 nights stay at the 3 star Rutland Hotel, Douglas • 4 breakfasts & 4 dinners • Excursions as stated • Journeys on Isle of Man Steam Railway, Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway • Airport to hotel transfer on arrival and departure



Isle of Wight Sounds of the 60s Carry on New Year Party

Warner Bembridge Coast, Isle of Wight

Friday 5 January, 2018 - Quote: BE1-KOS

GN Holidays & Voyages are taking over Warner's Bembridge Coast hotel again in early January 2018 - our 10th year in a row. Our must-do annual party, for over 40s only, has guests returning year after year to 'Carry On' celebrating the New Year. With a packed entertainment programme featuring original 60s bands Union Gap and The Cufflinks plus Vicki Lambert's tribute to 60s divas, great food, Free drinks from 6pm to midnight nightly, and free car ferry crossing, you're assured a great start to 2018.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrade to main hotel building from £30pp • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry • Free parking

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newreg17



BARGAIN BUY: Skoda's new Kodiaq flagship SUV

It's time to trade up to 17 reg

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

LAST year was a record year for UK car registrations, rising 2.3 per cent against 2015 to nearly 2.7 million.

And while the motor industry's mouthpiece, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), warned that 2017 will fall short of that record, it should still be another whopper.

SMMT chief executive Mike Hawes said: "Despite 2016's political and economic uncertainties, the UK's new car market delivered another record performance as carmakers offered an incredible range of innovative and high tech models.

"2017 may well be more challenging as sterling depreciation raises the price of imported goods but, with interest rates still at historic lows and a range of new models arriving in 2017, there are still many reasons for consumers to consider a new car in 2017."

Key reasons for 2016's success remain: lots of model choice and low interest rates, with the latter persuading many buyers to sign on the dotted line, or spend rather than save.

Britain's new car market is one of the most diverse in the world, with 40-plus brands offering nearly 400 different ranges, and with 70 new product launches already planned for 2017.

Fleet and company car users accounted for 1.38 million registrations last year, but private buyers were not far behind with 1.2 million deals done.

Diesel – dominant for so long – is starting to fall from favour, particularly with private buyers. It still took 47.7 per cent of the market versus petrol's 49 per cent, but alternatively fuelled vehicle (AFV) sales are growing fast now.

The sector expanded by more than a fifth (22.2 per cent) over last year, with plug-in hybrids and petrol electric hybrids up 41.9 per cent and 25.1 per cent respectively.

■ **Check out the rest of our supplement for buying your new '17 plate car.**



JUST ADD FUEL: Peugeot s PCP leasing makes the 208 a popular choice



SOARING HYBRIDS: Lexus NX hybrid is a UK Top 10 car for slow depreciation



SECTOR PIONEER: Nissan's Qashqai launched the crossover craze

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Small remains beautiful for our car choice



Above, TRENDY: crossovers and SUVs like this Lexus RX hybrid are in vogue. Below left, SMALL BUT BIG SELLERS: superminis like the Skoda Fabia rule. Below right, FAMILY FAVOURITES: hatchbacks like the Nissan Pulsar are still big.





FUEL prices may be better than they were a couple of years ago, but past price hikes had already helped force a downshift in preferred car size.

Insurance premiums, greater environmental awareness, and punitive road tax on larger cars, have also steered us away from typical family cars, once epitomized by those ubiquitous Fords, the Cortina, Sierra and Mondeo, and squeezed us into family hatchbacks first, and now superminis.

The supermini, and even smaller city car, now command around 40 per cent of new car sales, followed by family hatchbacks with around 25 per cent.

It might not be long though before family hatchbacks are under threat too from the new kid on the block, the crossover and its sometime parent, the SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle).

As the name implies, the crossover straddles several sectors by being part family hatch, part MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) or people carrier, and part SUV.

Nobody is saying this burgeoning sector will catch the supermini/city car though, which packs so much into a small package.

Even the commonality of the two-box supermini shape – dictated by the need for compact on-road dimensions – can be disguised by ever more imaginative customization, which is the industry's trendiest and possibly most lucrative innovation in recent years.

This might be a roof of a different colour, pattern or decal such as a flag, or it could be special wheels, bespoke door mirrors, or a wild paint job; small cars may have similar proportions, but they don't have to look alike.



GRAND GARAGE
1-11 Harold Road, MARGATE, CT9 2HT 01843 227933 www.grandgarage.co.uk

PEUGEOT RECOMMENDS TOTAL Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km) for the all-new 3008 SUV Range are: Urban 37.2 67.3 (7.6 - 4.2), Extra Urban 55.4 - 80.7 (5.1 - 3.5), Combined 47.1 - 70.6 (6.0 - 4.0) and CO_2 136 - 103 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Visit Peugeot.co.uk for more information. Information correct at time of going to print. Terms and conditions apply. Participating dealers only or visit peugeot.co.uk. **Hodges and Andrews Limited is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender.** We will introduce you to a limited number of lenders. #Passport Personal Lease: A guarantee may be required. Over 18s only. Finance is subject to status. Finance provided by and written quotations available from PSA Finance Ltd, Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill RH1 1QA. Model shown is the All-new PEUGEOT 3008 SUV 3008 GT Line, £3,495 initial rental contribution, customer initial rental £3,050, optional final rental £14495, 36 monthly rentals payable. 6,000 miles per annum. This is a finance lease, you will not own the car at the end of the contract. Excess mileage charges apply. All offers available on qualifying vehicles ordered and registered between 28/01/17 and 31/03/17 or until such time as they may be withdrawn by PEUGEOT at its complete discretion. The information and images here are based on the current technical data when published. The equipment shown is factory fitted or available at an optional extra cost, depending on the model. As part of a policy of continuous specification improvement, PEUGEOT reserve the right to modify the technical equipment, options and colours at any time. Calls may be recorded for training purposes. Calls charged at local rate. Information correct at time of going to press. Visit peugeot.co.uk for full details.

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CT 200h prices start from £21,995. Model shown is CT 200h F SPORT £26,245, includes optional metallic paint at £645.
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The MPG figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results. They are provided for comparability purposes, and may not reflect actual driving experience. CT 200h F SPORT fuel consumption and CO_2 figures: urban 68.9 (4.1 l/100km), extra-urban 70.6 (4.0 l/100km), combined 68.9 (4.1 l/100km), 94 g/km CO_2

Why white is winning war of the colour

WHITE is still Britain's favourite new car colour, but there are signs that former champ black is coming back.

All things are possible with our tastes in car colours though: white seemed dead and buried a decade ago, with less than one per cent of registrations; by 2014 the shade had bounced back to take a quarter of all registrations, having usurped black, the 2008-12 favourite.

This darkest of hues itself ended the imperious reign of silver as top seller from 2000-08, before which we favoured blue (1997-9) and, incredibly green (1996).

Fancy picking the next winner? Well, one half of the population might fancy pink – demand grew more than 80 per cent last year (3,527 units) – while 2016 demand for turquoise quadrupled over 2015 to 2,718.

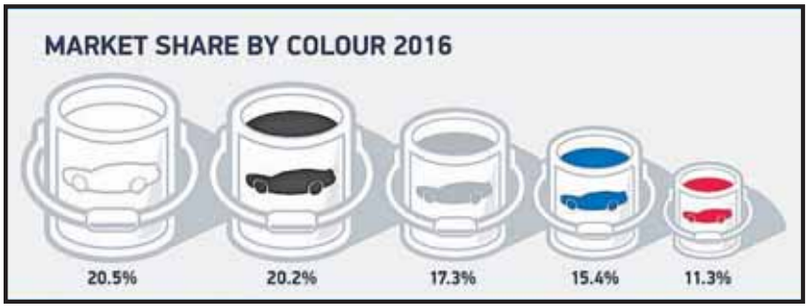
And bronze is back - up 44 per cent (8,902) – while brown and beige are seemingly in terminal decline, each having dropped to less than a percentage point.

Mind you, people posed the same question about white, ten years ago, which shows just how hard it is to read the colour code and pick a trendy hue you like that will also be saleable later.

After all, you don't want a sales nightmare like those houses blighted by hideous 1970s bathroom suites, such as 'Avocado', 'Acid Green' and 'Latte Brown'.



HIGH FIVE: this Lexus IS flaunts the UK's current fifth favourite hue



Below left, TRUE BLUE: this Skoda Octavia vRS Estate wears a past champion shade. Below right, WHITHER BROWN?: this new Peugeot 3008 looks sharp in its two-tone suit, but all-brown is currently down and out.





MOTORLINE CANTERBURY

Broad Oak Road, CANTERBURY, CT2 7PX 01227 451791 www.motorline-canterbury.co.uk

PEUGEOT RECOMMENDS TOTAL Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km) for the all-new 3008 SUV Range are: Urban 37.2 67.3 (7.6 - 4.2), Extra Urban 55.4 - 80.7 (5.1 - 3.5), Combined 47.1 - 70.6 (6.0 - 4.0) and CO_2 136 - 103 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Visit Peugeot.co.uk for more information. Information correct at time of going to print.

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Motorline ŠKODA Medway
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0843 658 9764
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.0 (9.1) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) to 88.3 (3.2); Combined 38.2 (7.4) to 80.7 (3.5). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA range are 170 to 90 g/km. Standard EU test figures are for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.



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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk





REFRESH: Spanish marque aims to maintain sales momentum with a facelift to one of its stars – the Leon family hatch



Fresh-faced Leon all part of Seat's on-going revival

SEAT is on a roll. For too long the Cinderella of the giant VW group, the Spanish brand now has a strong image of its own and burgeoning sales, boosted late last year by the excellent Ateca mid-size SUV's arrival.

But the sales rally had already started with the success of the stylish third generation Leon family hatchback – Seat's VW Golf/Ford Focus equivalent – and this has now had a facelift to keep it on the upward trend.

In truth, there was nothing wrong with the rakish body style – a Leon trademark across all three generations – but the revised car gets a full set of bright new LED lights and indicators.

There's also a new bumper design plus stretched grille with more chrome, designed to add to the car's presence and take it upmarket.

That last point is echoed inside, where a higher quality finish belies Seat's poor reputation of the past. There's also a quieter ambience on the move and an array of safety features already showcased on the Ateca.

An all-new eight-inch infotainment touchscreen is combined with wireless smartphone charging, Apple CarPlay or Android Auto and there is even a mobile phone booster for areas where the signal is poor.

And just in case you were unaware of Seat's loftier ambitions these days, there's a new flagship trim too, Xcellence.



A good spread of petrol and diesel power is offered, but the eye-catching newcomer is a punchy new 115PS/bhp 1.0 litre three-cylinder turbocharged petrol unit. The VW group's excellent double-clutch DSG auto/manual gearboxes are an option.

Prices are expected to start at £17,000 when the new look range arrives with dealers this month and all three previous body formats are available: the sleek five-door, racy three-door SC (Sports Coupé) and elegant load-lugging estate model – the ST (Sports Tourer).

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KENT LIFE

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New Renault Mégane range are: urban 36.2 (7.8)–68.9 (4.1); extra-urban 57.7 (4.9)–80.7 (3.5); combined 47.1 (6)–76.4 (3.7). The official CO_2 emissions are 134–96g/km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU Legislation and may not reflect real-life driving results.

All-New Mégane Sport Tourer Dynamique Nav TCe 130 monthly payment based on £6,000 deposit, 24 monthly payments of £249, optional final payment of £7,674. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offer based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 31st March 2017. All-New Mégane Sport Tourer shown with optional metallic paint, available at £545.

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www.motorline.co.uk/renault

Book a test drive

Gallic charm up against German class

It might have a fancy name but Renault's new Mégane Sport Tourer is an old school estate with trendy looks. But do the extra frills make it a real contender?

Renault Mégane Sportt Tourer Dynamique dCi 130

Price:	from £23,550
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★

GERMAN premium brands started it with so-called 'lifestyle estates' and fancy names like Touring and Avant.

Owners thinking that they were buying into the country set didn't worry then that those posh labels might be euphemisms for 'missing' - as in load space.

No, lifestyle estates weren't always good load luggers, but while estate cars have undoubtedly become cooler – acquiring a plethora of names in place of the now despised e-word – most carmakers know they must walk the talk on stowage space.

So Renault gets top marks for the new generation Mégane Sport Tourer, not only a sleek (whisper it) estate car with a racy label, but a decent load carrier offering a 580-litre boot – that's up with the sector leaders.

It also has one of the most versatile load areas; fold the front seat down too and the car takes a 2.77-metre load – the longest in its class. The 60/40 split rear seat can also be quickly unlocked and folded.

And that's just its appeal as an estate car, but there is also a solidity and quality about the latest Mégane line-up that brings the French brand back into contention with robust rivals such as the Golf, Astra and Focus.







But Renault wouldn't be Renault if it didn't throw in some fancy gizmos: Maybe the remote control entry/ignition fob resembling a posh bar of courtesy soap would continue to charm, or I'd still oooh and aaah at atmospheric cabin lighting showing which driving mode I'm in, such as red for Sport and green for Eco.

But I can't see the clunky iPad wannabe touchscreen ever winning me over; even with familiarity, it would still be a distraction.

But it's hard not to like the Mégane overall. Like other recent Renault successes like the Clio supermini and the Captur and Kadjar crossovers, it does have a certain Gallic je ne sais quoi and both hatchback and Sport Tourer models are deceptively roomy, despite the sporty ambience inside.

Out on the road, the Megane is 'modern French'; no more lolling on the bends as a sacrifice to equilibrium over anecdotal Gallic cobbles.

Instead, the comfort remains but handling is decently sharp, though keen drivers must check out GT models.

The array of engines includes small and trendy turbocharged petrol units up to impressively smooth, clean and frugal diesels, but I particularly enjoyed the pacey and flexible 130hp 1.6 diesel in the test car – 0-62mph in 10 seconds and a remarkable 70.6mpg (official combined).

And if you are immune to soap bar key fobs, maybe a decent warranty will tempt you: Renault's four years/100,000 miles is one of the better ones.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS ACT 2009

IFCA

BOTTOM TOWED FISHING GEAR (PROHIBITED AREAS) BYELAW 2017

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority intends to apply to the Minister for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation of a Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (Prohibited Areas) Byelaw 2017 to prohibit the use of all types of bottom trawl in specified areas to protect the designated features of those areas and therefore prevent damage to or deterioration of the site. This byelaw will now include areas within Margate and Long Sands SCI and will replace the existing Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (Prohibited Areas) Byelaw.

During the period of 28 days from the date of the publication of this Notice a copy of the Byelaw and Impact Assessment will be deposited at the offices of the applicant, at the address given below and at www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk.

Objections or representations concerning this notification should be made within 28 days of the date of this notice to both addresses given below:

Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team
Marine Management Organisation
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH
or ifcabyelaws@marinemanagement.org.uk

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Paragon House
Albert Street
Ramsgate
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Working hours are 32.5 p/w (8.45am – 3.45pm), term time only.
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Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

For an application pack, please write to/telephone
(stating the role for which you are applying):
Mrs Linda Taylor, School Business Manager
Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP
(01634 338236)

Please note CV's will NOT be accepted.
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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that Alfresco Events of 20 Forest Way, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4FW

has applied to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for the PROVISIONAL STATEMENT of

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From 17:30 to 23:59 on Friday 4th August 2017 and from 12:00 to 23.59 on Saturday 5th August 2017

for the premises Kings Hill Sports Park

situated at 200 Beacon Avenue, Kings Hill, Kent. ME19 4QP

Any person wishing to submit representation about the proposals should make them in writing to: Licensing Services, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4LZ giving in detail the grounds of objection by

01/03/2017

It is an offence knowlingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.

LICENSING ACT 2003:
Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that The Cuban Canterbury Ltd has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence to operate the following Regulated Activities: Plays, Films, Recorded Music, Performance of Dance and the Sale of Alcohol (on and off the premises) from 08:00 to 03:00hrs every day; Live Music from 08:00 to 01:00hrs; Late Night Refreshment from 23:00 to 03:30 hrs every day, all at the following premises: The Cuban, 41B - 43 High Street, Canterbury CT1 2RY.

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 28/02/2017. The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that their identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

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Kaylan, 13, flying the flag in Bornio

The Sevenoaks teen will compete at English Alpine Champs

Skiing

By Phil Jones
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

HE may have been competing at the event year after year, but Sevenoaks skier Kaylan Huisman does not think that gives him any advantage over the first timers as he prepares to compete at the English Alpine Championships, in Italy.

The 13-year-old has competed at the event since he was in the 'minis' category, and last year – his first in the under-14 category – saw success with fifth and sixth place finishes in the Giant Slalom and Super G, respectively.

The English Alpine Championships are a week of national-level racing and skiing camaraderie, featuring the best English skiers in the country, ranging from under-10s up to senior athletes.

And despite Huisman's familiarity with the slopes in Bormio, he thinks the excitement of appearing there for the first time levels out the piste knowledge he has acquired over the years.

"Being there before does give me an advantage because I know how everything runs and there's less stress, but then on the other hand if you come there for the first time, there's always something to be excited about," said the Ambition skier.

"I love racing everywhere - it's racing, it's what you've been working up to, so there's always excitement.

"I've just had an international race in the Czech Republic, and now it's on to Bormio, I'm going to be racing all the events there.

"Different years in the past have been better than others, but overall racing there has been pretty good for me."



READY: Kaylan Huisman will represent the county in Italy next week

The championships take place from February 11-17.

Follow the English Alpine Championships on the Snowsport England Facebook page and get live updates on Twitter @SnowsportEng.

Full results will be available at www.snowsportengland.org.uk while you can find your nearest slope offering value-for-money GO SKI GO BOARD sessions at www.goskigoboard.org.uk

Fifa rules prevent Gills recruit from playing

Football

A DEFENDER who signed for Gillingham earlier this week is ineligible to play for the club, it has emerged.

The Gills announced on Thursday that former West Ham academy graduate Bondz N'Gala had joined the club's ranks, but a change in regulations means the defender will be unavailable to appear at Priestfield.

Unbeknown to both the club and the EFL, Fifa, football's governing body, modified their rules and regulations regarding player appearances and contracts for the 2016/17 season.

The new law lists National League sides as professional clubs, and as a result, players are only permitted to make competitive appearances for a maximum of two teams they are contracted to during any one campaign.



BAN: Bondz N'Gala can't feature

As a result of N'Gala playing for both Barnet in League Two and National League side Eastleigh earlier in the season, Gillingham are unable to field their new man.

A club spokesperson said in a statement: "Club chairman Paul Scally and head coach Ady Pennock are both extremely disappointed by this outcome.

"However, the club were not made aware of this regulation, one that has also scuppered signings at other EFL clubs in the past 48 hours.

"The club will not be commenting further on this issue."

Elsewhere, the club did successfully bring in Bournemouth duo Harry Cornick and Joe Quigley while midfielder Billy Knott left on loan.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Dennis returns to top bill at Mote Park show

BOXING fans in Maidstone have just three weeks to wait until a host of Kent prospects appear on a sell-out show at Mote Park.

Topping the bill is Chatham middleweight champion Grant Dennis, looking to extend his unbeaten record to eight wins in as many bouts in a six-round contest against Plymouth's Christian Hoskin Gomez.

Two unbeaten prospects have fallen at the hands of the 21-year-old from Andalucía so Dennis will need to be at his best on the night.

For Dennis, 33, this will be his first fight since he ripped the Southern Area belt away from champion Nicky Jenman in front of his home crowd in Brighton last November, earning him a top 20 ranking in the talent-laden 160lbs division topped by Billy Joe Saunders.

The middleweight prospect is eyeing bigger honours in 2017 but says he will happily defend his area title while he awaits the call for bigger shots.



STAR: Grant Dennis



HOME: Ebbsfleet United play at Stonebridge Road

Fleet beat deadline to secure McQueen deal

EBBSFLEET United bolstered their promotion hopes with the permanent signing of promising striker Darren McQueen for an undisclosed fee on transfer deadline day.

The 21-year-old striker, who has scored 12 goals this season, joined the club in the close season on a loan arrangement having played for Maldon & Tiptree in the Ryman League Division One North last year.

Having impressed in his six months at the club, Fleet boss Daryl McMahon has now moved to secure McQueen's services to keep him at Stonebridge Road.

He told the club's website: "Darren is a young player with great potential which has already been evident to fans in his performances so far and we are delighted to have him with us permanently."

Under 19 ODI at Spitfire Ground

KENT will welcome some of the finest young cricket talent in the world this summer as part of Canterbury Cricket Week.

England's most promising teenagers will take on their Indian counterparts in an Under 19 one-day international at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence on August 9, bosses have confirmed.

The 166th edition of the oldest festival in county cricket already features the Kent v West Indies tour match on August 6-8, bookended by floodlit Friday evening T20 Blast matches against Sussex and Hampshire on August 4 and 11.

Elsewhere this week the county were beaten by a West Indies Under 19 outfit at the Sir Vivian Richards in the Caribbean Super50 on the FGS Plant Tour.

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